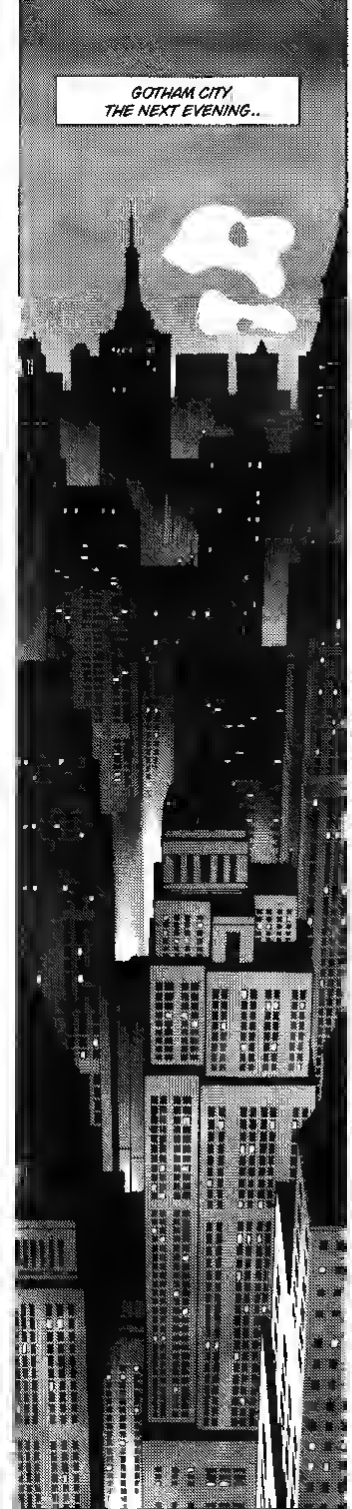
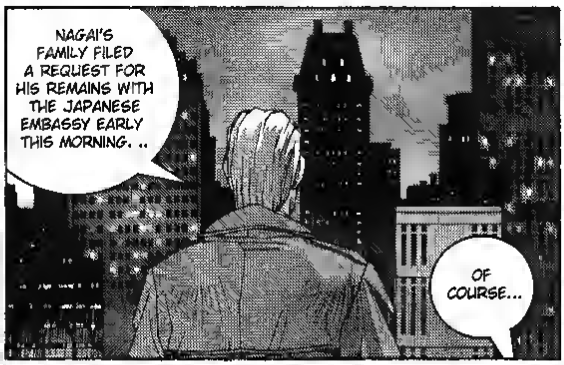
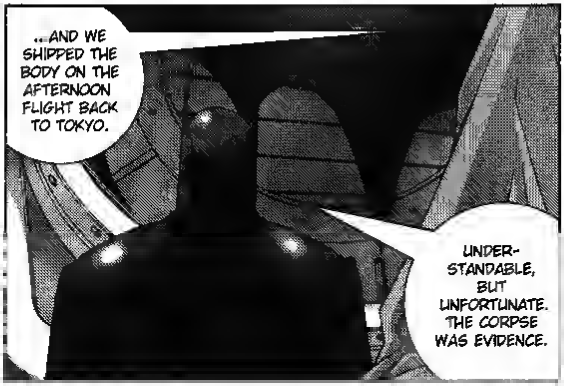
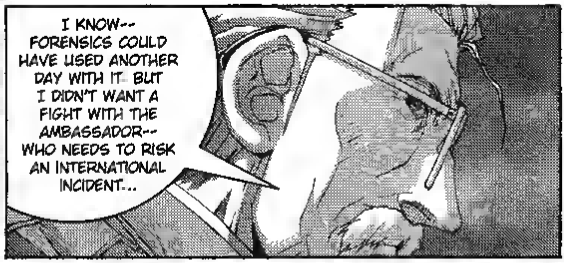

GOTHAM CITY
THE NEXT EVENING..

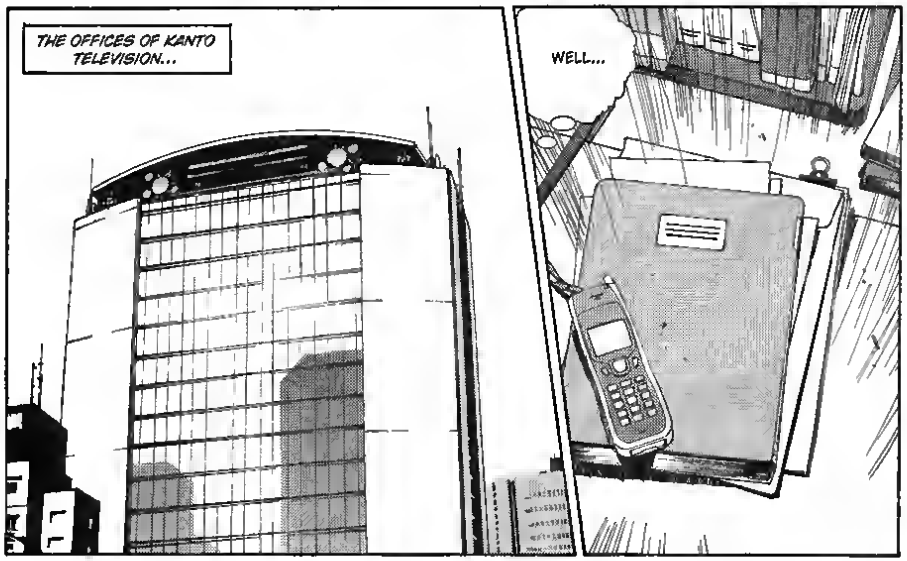

NAGAI'S FAMILY FILED A REQUEST FOR HIS REMAINS WITH THE JAPANESE EMBASSY EARLY THIS MORNING. ..
OF COURSE...


...AND WE SHIPPED THE BODY ON THE AFTERNOON FLIGHT BACK TO TOKYO.
UNDER-STANDABLE, BUT UNFORTUNATE. THE CORPSE WAS EVIDENCE.


I KNOW-- FORENSICS COULD HAVE USED ANOTHER DAY WITH IT. BUT I DIDN'T WANT A FIGHT WITH THE AMBASSADOR-- WHO NEEDS TO RISK AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT...

I'M AFRAID IT'S A LITTLE LATE TO AVOID THE RISK, JIM... THIS ALREADY *IS* AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT...

"...AND IT'S ONE I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH..."
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER. TOKYO, JAPAN.


THE OFFICES OF KANTO TELEVISION...

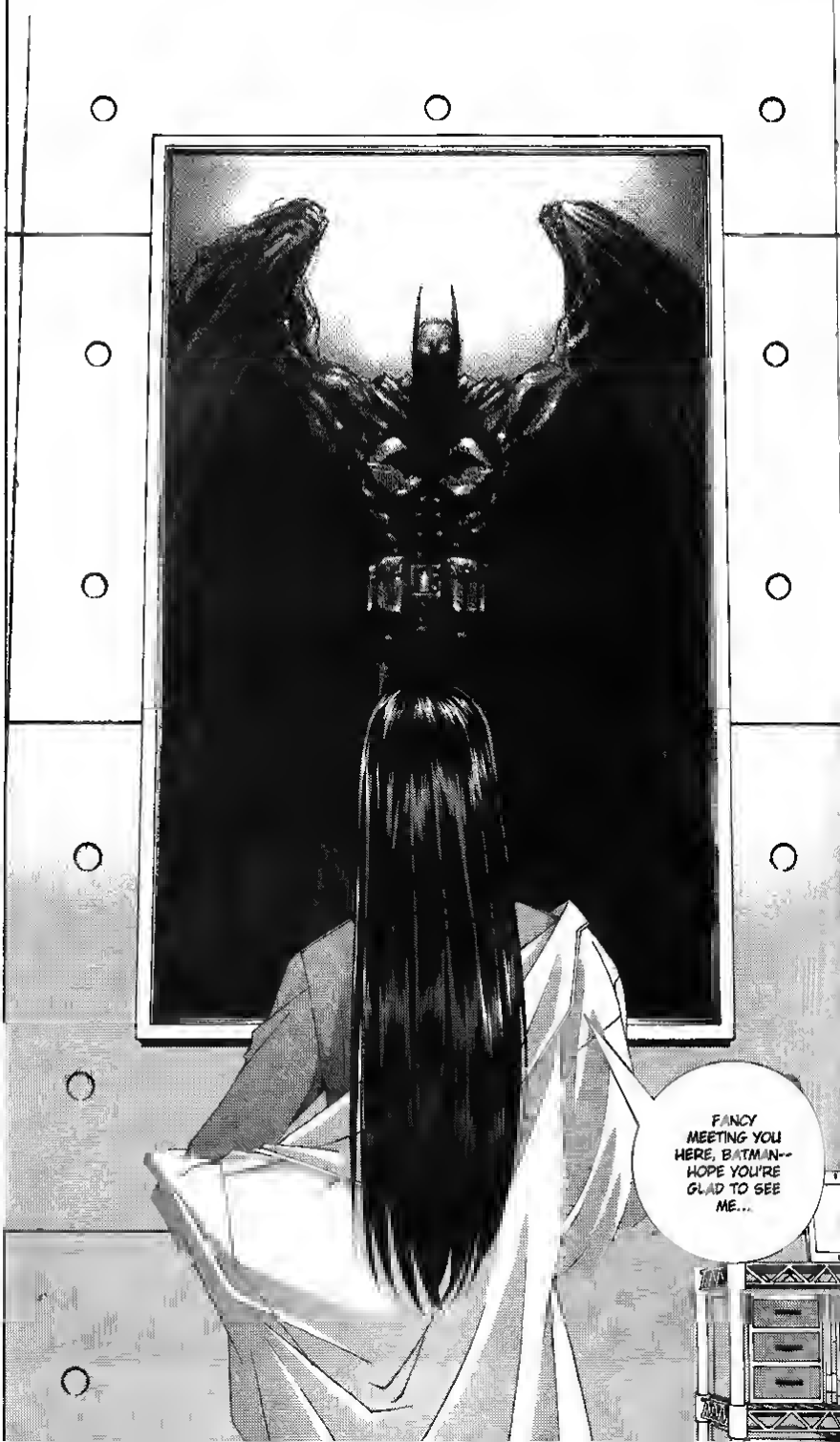
WELL...

...IT'S NO SURPRISE. MY REQUEST TO COMPLETE THE "BATMAN REPORT" HAS BEEN DENIED.
THE NETWORK FEELS THEY HAVE ALREADY LOST ENOUGH FACE OVER THIS STORY.

NO REASON TO CALL ATTENTION TO NAGAI'S CRIMES BY RUNNING A PROGRAM PRODUCED BY THE GUILTY PARTY...
YUKO! YUKO!

OH... HI KAYO.
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT UPSET WITH ME, TAKING OVER YOUR ANCHOR POSITION ON THE SHOW. I MEAN, I REALLY COULDN'T...
DON'T BE SILLY, KAYO. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT--ANYWAY, I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.
AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, YOU'RE NO REPORTER.
I HAVE TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE, ANYWAY--THE TABLOIDS AND THE OTHER NETWORKS' NEWS SHOWS ARE DOGGING MY HEELS
IT'LL ALL BLOW OVER IN A FEW MONTHS, YOU'LL SEE...AND YOU'LL BE BACK ON TOP AGAIN!
KAYO! YOU'RE NEEDED IN THE STUDIO FOR A RUN-THROUGH!
BE RIGHT THERE!
YUKO, YOU'RE THE BEST--YOU'RE A GREAT FRIEND.
BREAK A LEG, KAYO.
AND I MEAN THAT.
WHY DID I EVEN BOTHER TO COME IN?

IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS I WISH I HAD A CAT...
WELCOME HOME, YUKO ..
SHUPP
SHUPP
clik
...BUT I'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR A BAT...


FANCY MEETING YOU HERE, BATMAN-- HOPE YOU'RE GLAD TO SEE ME...

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, I WONDER...
...IF I TOLD YOU WE'D MET ONCE BEFORE?
SO LONG AGO, SO FAR FROM MY HOME...
AND YET RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF YOURS.
FUNNY HOW A CHILDHOOD MEMORY...

"...CAN SEEM LIKE A DREAM..."
RIDING THE SUBWAY WAS EXCITING, DADDY--BUT WALKING THE STREETS FRIGHTENS ME...
PATIENCE, YUKO--IT'S JUST A FEW MORE BLOCKS TO THE HOTEL...
...ACCORDING TO THE MAP, ANYWAY--THESE STREETS ARE CONFUSING..
DEAR, MAYBE WE SHOULD HAIL A CAB. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I WOULD, BUT THEY ALL SEEM OCCUPIED.
BESIDES, I'M PRACTICALLY CERTAIN THE HOTEL IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
COME ALONG, YUK--

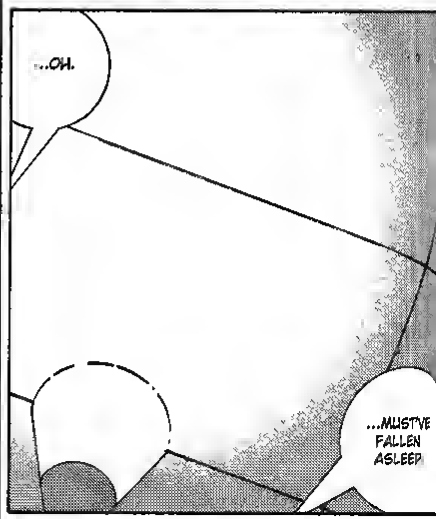
UH-OH.
WELCOME TO GOTHAM CITY.
BACK THE OTHER WAY! NOW!
RUN, YUKO!
KLOP KLOP KLOP
WE'LL MAKE THIS SHORT AND SWEET-- KEEP YOUR PASSPORTS--
--ALL WE WANT'S THE MONEY AND VALUABLES!
rrrrrr
HELP! SOMEBODY, ANYBODY-- HELP!
DADDY, SHUT THAT BRAT UP, OR I'LL--

WRONG.
BATMAN!
WHO... WHAT IS THAT?!

ARGGGH!!
WHA
MM!
OH...
YUKO, DON'T MOVE...
WE DON'T KNOW--HE COULD BE DANGEROUS...

HELLO WHO ARE YOU?

I'M YUKO.
.. YUKO.


...OH.
...MUST'VE FALLEN ASLEEP

SUCH A VIVID DREAM... SUCH A VIVID MEMORY...
...THINK I'LL CATCH THE NEWS AND GO TO SLEEP FOR REAL...
KLIK!
ゴッサムシティの大富豪
ブルース・ウェイン氏 来日!!
BRUCE...!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MAKE THE TOKYO NEWS?
AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIST BRUCE WAYNE IS MEETING WITH TOP EXECUTIVES OF TOMIOKA PHARMA-CEUTICALS... A MERGER IS RUMORED..
SO THAT'S YOUR "BUSI-NESS"...
WAYNE ARRIVED IN TOKYO THIS MORNING...
...AND IS EXPECTED TO DO HIS OWN NEGOTIATING WITH PRESIDENT KENJI TOMIOKA...
HMMM...
JUST IN AND ALREADY AT WORK...
I JUST HOPE HE REALLY WILL MAKE TIME FOR ME...
...SUCH A BUSY IMPORTANT M..N...

BRRING!!
YES... HELLO. YUKO YAGI SPEAKING...
YES . YES . MR WAYNE?
BRUCE WAYNE?
YES, OF COURSE...
...TELL MR. WAYNE I'D BE HAPPY TO MEET HIM AT THE STUDIO.
11 A.M.? NO PROBLEM. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HIM AGAIN.
klik!

OHMIGOD! IT'S ALREADY 10 A.M.!
WHAT COULD HE BE THINKING?
WHY ASK ME TO MEET HIM AT THE TV STUDIO UNLESS..
...UNLESS HE WANTS TO DO AN INTERVIEW... OR HAS SOME ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE...
...UNLESS HE WANTS TO DO IT LIVE... AND GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GET BACK ON THE AIR...
...A SECOND CHANCE!
OF COURSE, HE MIGHT JUST WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN..
..BUT THAT'S JUST WISHFUL THINKING...

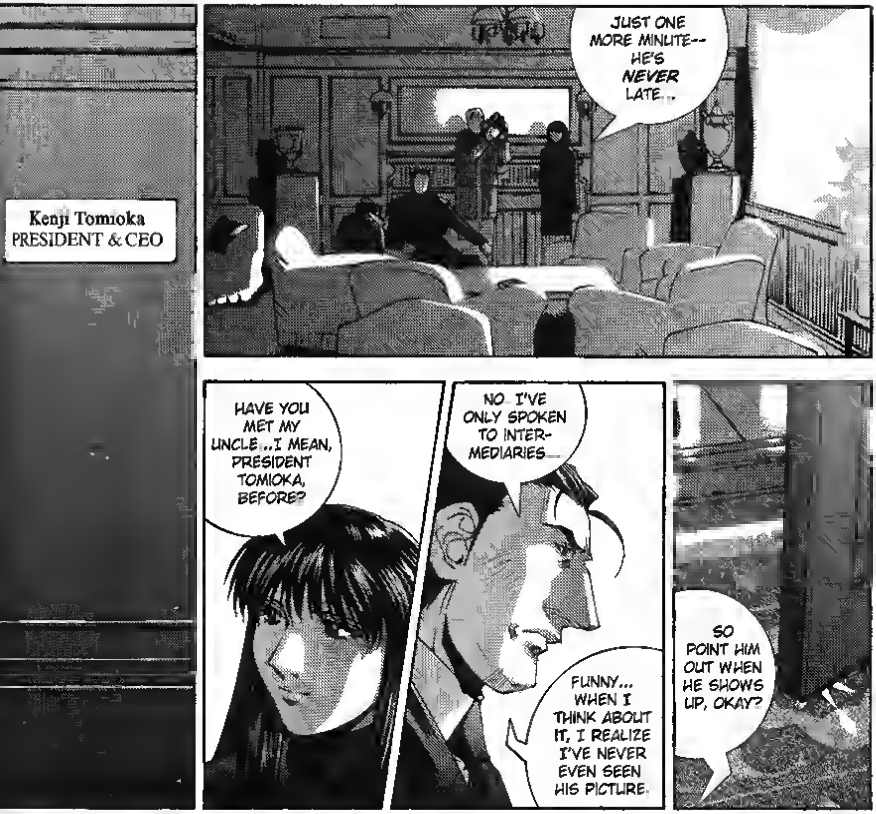
GOOD MORNING, YUKO.
THANKS FOR COMING IN DURING YOUR LEAVE OF ABSENCE...
THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE WASN'T MY IDEA...
AND LIFTING IT WASN'T MINE. YOU HAVE MR. WAYNE TO THANK...
MR WAYNE...

NOT "MR. WAYNE," YUKO--BRUCE AND IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN
BRUCE... HELLO, BRUCE...
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YUKO IN PRIVATE. SHE'S THE ONLY REPORTER I'LL SPEAK WITH. D'YOU MIND?
SO NOW I'M ON *YOUR* SIDE OF THE OCEAN...

I REALLY DO HAVE BUSINESS HERE, YUKO... ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE I'M STALKING YOU..
NONSENSE-- THE THOUGHT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME...
BUT I FEEL STRANGELY AT HOME HERE.
I REALLY DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU SO SOON...
..THOUGH THE TRUTH IS I CAN USE A FRIEND.
BUT EVEN MY UNCLE CAN'T HELP ME, NOW.
I UNDER-STAND, YUKO.
DO YOU, BRUCE?
SOMEBODY HAD TO TAKE THE FALL FOR WHAT HAPPENED IN GOTHAM CITY...
...AND SINCE NAGAI WAS DEAD... I GOT THE BLAME. IT'S SO UNFAIR... HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN--
DON'T WORRY.
I THINK WE CAN GIVE YOUR CAREER A BOOST...

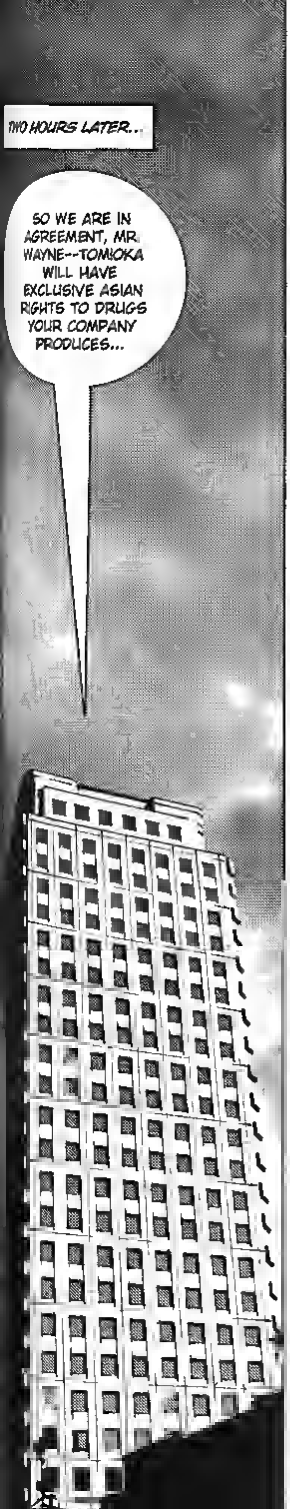
HOW DO YOU INTEND TO ..
YOU'RE GOING WITH ME TO TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS TOMORROW CLOSE-UP REPORT--- EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE.

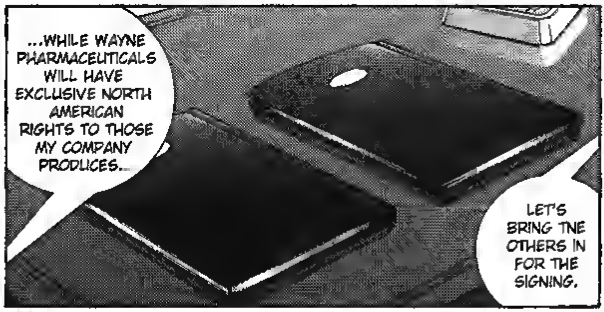
TH-- THANK YOU, BRUCE...
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR UNCLE, YUKO?
THEY SAY HE'S A WONDERFUL MAN, BRUCE...
...BUT WE'VE NEVER BEEN CLOSE
TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS


Kenji Tomioka
PRESIDENT & CEO
JUST ONE MORE MINUTE-- HE'S NEVER LATE...
HAVE YOU MET MY UNCLE...I MEAN, PRESIDENT TOMIOKA, BEFORE?
NO. I'VE ONLY SPOKEN TO INTER-MEDIARIES...
FUNNY... WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I REALIZE I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN HIS PICTURE.
SO POINT HIM OUT WHEN HE SHOWS UP, OKAY?

GOOD MORNING, MR WAYNE.
I AM KENJI TOMIOKA.. PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY.

HOW DO YOU DO?
I SEE THIS HISTORIC MOMENT IS BEING RECORDED.
WE'LL NEGOTIATE IN PRIVATE, OBVIOUSLY, BUT I REQUESTED THAT YOUR NIECE COVER MY VISIT.
I'M AWARE OF THAT... IN FACT, THE ONLY REASON I GAVE MY APPROVAL WAS THAT THIS WAS *YOUR* IDEA... AND I BELIEVE I KNOW YOUR REASONS.
SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR AIDING MY NIECE NOW, SHALL WE BEGIN?
LET'S


TWO HOURS LATER...
SO WE ARE IN AGREEMENT, MR. WAYNE--TOMIOKA WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE ASIAN RIGHTS TO DRUGS YOUR COMPANY PRODUCES...


...WHILE WAYNE PHARMACEUTICALS WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE NORTH AMERICAN RIGHTS TO THOSE MY COMPANY PRODUCES...
LET'S BRING THE OTHERS IN FOR THE SIGNING.

ACCORDING TO PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, KENJI TOMIOKA IS FORTY-SIX YEARS OLD...
..BUT HE LOOKS MUCH OLDER.

HE MIGHT BE SIXTY-FIVE OR EVEN SEVENTY...
FOR A MAN IN THE BUSINESS OF HEALTH, HIS OWN CONDITION WOULD APPEAR TO BE LESS THAN ROSY. .

NOW THAT OUR BUSINESS IS CONCLUDED, I HAVE A QUESTION.

IT'S ABOUT GOTHAM'S URBAN VIGILANTE... THE BATMAN.
GO AHEAD...

..BUT I ASSURE YOU I HAVE NO PRIVILEGED INFORMATION ABOUT THE MAN...
OH REALLY? PITY.
FORGIVE ME IF I OVERSTEP... BUT I CONSIDER YOUR GOTHAM CITY FORTUNATE INDEED...
...FORTUNATE TO HAVE THIS CRUSADER IN ITS MIDST.
NOT AS HIGH AS TOKYO'S CRIME RATE, MR WAYNE...BUT THEN WE DON'T HAVE A PROTECTOR LIKE YOURS.
AND YOU THINK TOKYO MIGHT BE BETTER OFF WITH ITS OWN VERSION OF OUR BATMAN?
IT'S A THOUGHT THAT INTRIGUES ME, I ADMIT... GOTHAM CITY'S DARK KNIGHT STANDS AS A CHALLENGE TO EVIL...
SOME WOULD SAY HE ATTRACTS EVIL, MR. TOMIOKA--MASTER CRIMINALS LIKE THE JOKER, TWO-FACE, PENGUIN, RIDDLER.
NONETHELESS, GOTHAM CITY DOES STILL HAVE A HIGH CRIME RATE
AH, AND THEY FLOCK TO GOTHAM TO MATCH WITS WITH THE BATMAN
BUT IF BATMAN WERE NOT IN GOTHAM CITY, THOSE EVIL ONES MIGHT BE FLUNG ACROSS THE FACE OF YOUR MAP

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THAT THE BATMAN IS TROUBLED BY THIS ..
...AS ANYONE WOULD BE IF THEY BELIEVED THEIR PRESENCE ENCOURAGES A PECULIAR SORT OF LARGER-THAN-LIFE CRIMINAL.
IT'S AN INTERESTING CONUNDRUM...
...BUT I WOULD SAY THE JOKERS, THE TWO-FACES OF OUR WORLD ARE MERELY MODERN MANIFESTATIONS OF AN AGE-OLD DISEASE.
IS CRIME A DISEASE?
A DISEASE OF THE SOUL, MOST ASSUREDLY.
HOW IRONIC, DON'T YOU THINK?
THAT SO DARK A FIGURE DEFENDS THE LIGHT?

IRONIC? I'M NOT SURE. PERHAPS A DARK FIGURE IS NEEDED TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE...
I MYSELF HAVE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO RIDDING THE WORLD OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE...
INDEED... SOMETIMES TO DEFEAT THE ENEMY ONE MUST WALK IN HIS FOOTSTEPS...

PERHAPS, IN MY SMALL WAY, I AM LIKE BATMAN...
DOESN'T HE BATTLE THE DISEASE THAT IS CRIME?

!
MR TOMIOKA, YOU'RE A WELL-KNOWN PHILANTHROPIST...

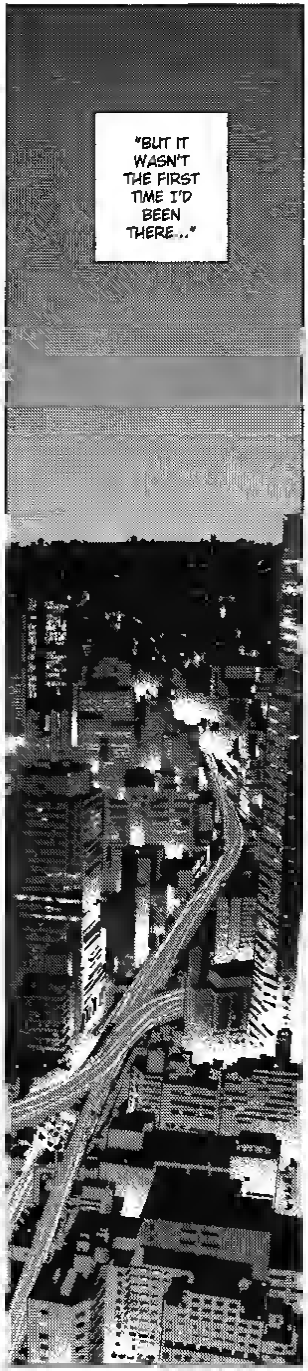
"LIKE YOU, MR. TOMIOKA, I HAVE WEALTH AND--IN MY SMALL WAY-- I TRY TO PROTECT SOCIETY FROM THE DISEASE OF CRIME.
"B... MR. TOMIOKA... BATMAN IS COMBATING THE SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE WE MUST SEEK OUT AND ELIMINATE THE ROOT CAUSES."

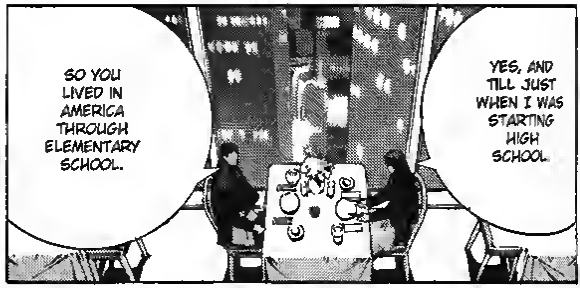
POVERTY, IGNORANCE, INTOLERANCE...

MR. WAYNE, I COULD NOT AGREE MORE.
GLAD TO HEAR THAT, SIR.
AND MR WAYNE ... PERHAPS OUR LITTLE AGREEMENT TODAY WILL BE A FIRST STEP..
...A FIRST STEP IN A GREAT PARTNERSHIP.
I HOPE SO AS WELL.
WE TWO... EACH IN OUR OWN COUNTRY... FIGHTING DISEASE...
WOULD THAT TOKYO, LIKE GOTHAM, HAD ITS OWN BATMAN.
YES...BUT I'M CERTAIN AN INDIVIDUAL LIKE BATMAN ARISES ONLY FROM A UNIQUE SET OF CIRCUM-STANCES...
BUT SCIENCE CAN OFTEN REPLICATE SEEMINGLY UNIQUE CIRCUM-STANCES...
...DON'T YOU AGREE, MR. WAYNE?
WHAT AM I MISSING HERE?
BESIDES, WE MUSTN'T BE SELFISH, MR. WAYNE ..
...ISN'T TOKYO SUFFICIENTLY CRIME-RIDDEN TO DESERVE ITS OWN BATMAN?
BATMAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOTHAM CAN'T BE REPLICATED ELSEWHERE...

...BUT IF YOU ARE TRULY CONCERNED ABOUT CRIME HERE IN TOKYO, YOU SHOULD LEND YOUR SUPPORT TO SOCIAL CAUSES... AND THE POLICE
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. WAYNE...
...WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, THERE IS ONLY ONE BATMAN AND THAT'S HOW IT SHALL REMAIN... ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
"NOW THAT WAS WEIRD, DON'T YOU THINK, YUKO?"
VRMMMMMM

MY UNCLE WAS IN A STRANGE MOOD, I'M AFRAID...
VRRRRRRR
I SHOULD SAY-- WE SPENT MORE TIME TALKING ABOUT BATMAN THAN NEGOTIATING A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT.
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW HIM VERY WELL...
I ADMIRE YOUR UNCLE'S POLICIES. TOMIOKA SPENDS ITS MONEY ON R&D, NOT ADVERTISING, TO MAKE HIS PRODUCTS AFFORDABLE...
I THINK HE'S SINCERE ABOUT DOING GOOD.
I'M SURE HE IS. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SUBJECT OF BATMAN, HE SEEMS OBSESSED...
BATMAN HAS FANS ALL OVER THE WORLD, BRUCE...
I KNOW THAT, YUKO-- AND I ALSO KNOW THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THEM...
I WON'T DENY IT-- BUT I CAME TO GOTHAM BECAUSE IT WAS MY JOB...


"BUT IT WASN'T THE FIRST TIME I'D BEEN THERE..."


SO YOU LIVED IN AMERICA THROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL..
YES, AND TILL JUST WHEN I WAS STARTING HIGH SCHOOL.

WELL THAT EXPLAINS YOUR LOVELY ENGLISH. AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST BRILLIANT...
SORRY. ANYWAY, I WAS IN THE SECOND, NO, THIRD GRADE...

...WHEN PAPA TOOK ME ON A TRIP TO GOTHAM...

"...AND THAT'S HOW BATMAN RESCUED US.
I KNOW IT SOUNDS LIKE A CHILD'S DREAM...BUT IT WAS REAL.

NOT A DREAM, YUKO... A NIGHTMARE, EVEN IF IT DID HAVE A HAPPY ENDING.
I GUESS THAT WAS THE START OF MY FASCINATION WITH BATMAN...
I CAME TO IDOLIZE HIM... IT WAS A SCHOOLGIRL CRUSH KINDA THING...
FUNNY, THOUGH-- I WAS RELUCTANT TO MEET HIM AGAIN, AFRAID HE WOULDN'T LIVE UP TO MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES...
"BUT WHEN WE DID MEET AGAIN...
"...HE WAS EXACTLY THE WAY I'D ALWAYS HELD HIM IN MY MIND...
AND THANKS TO HIM, I'M ALIVE TO TELL YOU THE STORY!
HERE'S TO BATMAN...
IF I'M GOING TO TOAST...
.I'D RATHER IT WAS TO YOUR HEALTH..

HE IS STILL YOUR HERO? BATMAN I MEAN?
OR IS HE JUST A MAN NOW?
I WOULD SAY BOTH...WHICH I GUESS IS WHY I'M SO DISAPPOINTED THE DOCUMENTARY FELL THROUGH
I WANTED TO DO AN IN-DEPTH REPORT ON HIM, TO BETTER EXPLAIN HIM AND HIS MOTIVES TO THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN.
I WANTED THE REST OF MY COUNTRY TO SEE HIM THE WAY I HAD...INSTEAD, I RETURNED EMPTY-HANDED...
YOU KNOW, YUKO--WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AS A CHILD...
...A SIMILAR THING HAPPENED TO ME TOO.
REALLY, BRUCE?
REALLY.

"BUT IN MY CASE...
"...THERE WAS NO ONE TO COME TO THE RESCUE.
"I LOST MY PARENTS THAT NIGHT...

...TO THE DISEASE OF CRIME.
BRUCE... I HAD NO IDEA...
THERE WAS NO BATMAN, THEN...
HE MUST'VE JUST BEEN GETTING STARTED WHEN YOU WERE A KID.
WE WERE LUCKY. WE WERE AMONG THE FIRST THAT HE HELPED. BUT HE CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE.
BRUCE... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

"I'M FINE, YUKO..."
"YES...BUT LET'S CALL IT A NIGHT, OKAY?"
"ARE YOU SURE?"

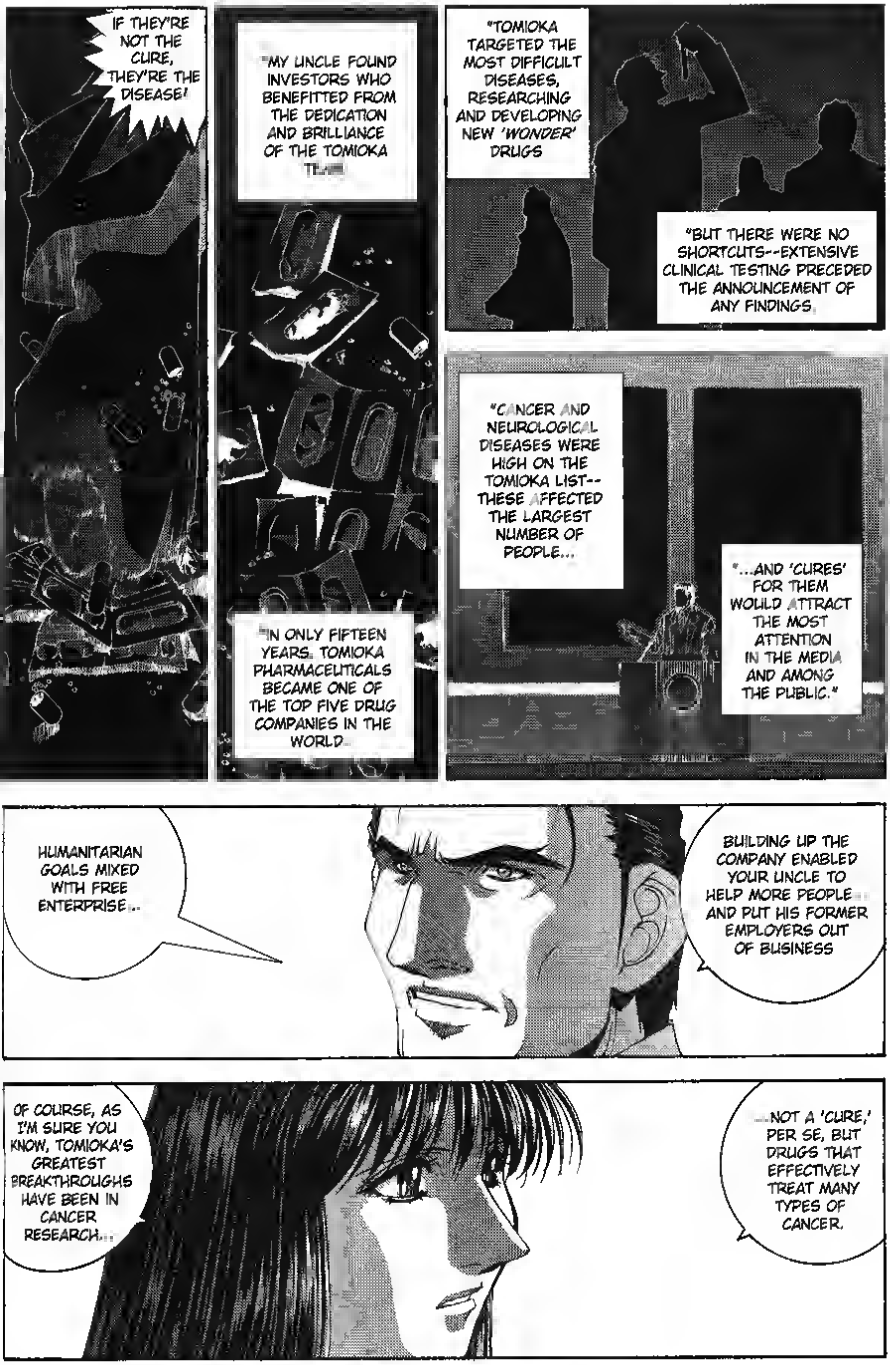
OKAY... A NEW DAY.

UP AND AT 'EM YUKO..
I'M OFF TO WORK, BATMAN...
...THANKS TO YOUR FRIEND BRUCE WAYNE, THAT IS.
THE CAMERA CREW'S LINED UP, TO FOLLOW ME ON BRUCE'S INSPECTIONS OF ALL HIS TOKYO BUSINESSES..
IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG, TOUGH, DAY...
BUT I THINK I'M UP TO THE TASK .

AND AS THE HOURS WEAR ON...
AS CONSTRUCTION SITE INSPECTIONS GIVE WAY TO FACTORY TOURS...
AND FINALLY, TO AN AFTERNOON TALK-SHOW APPEARANCE...
YUKO COMES TO THINK OF BRUCE WAYNE AS A HUMAN DYNAMO ALMOST EQUAL TO BATMAN.
YES...
YES, SIR...
...NOTHING TO REPORT, SIR

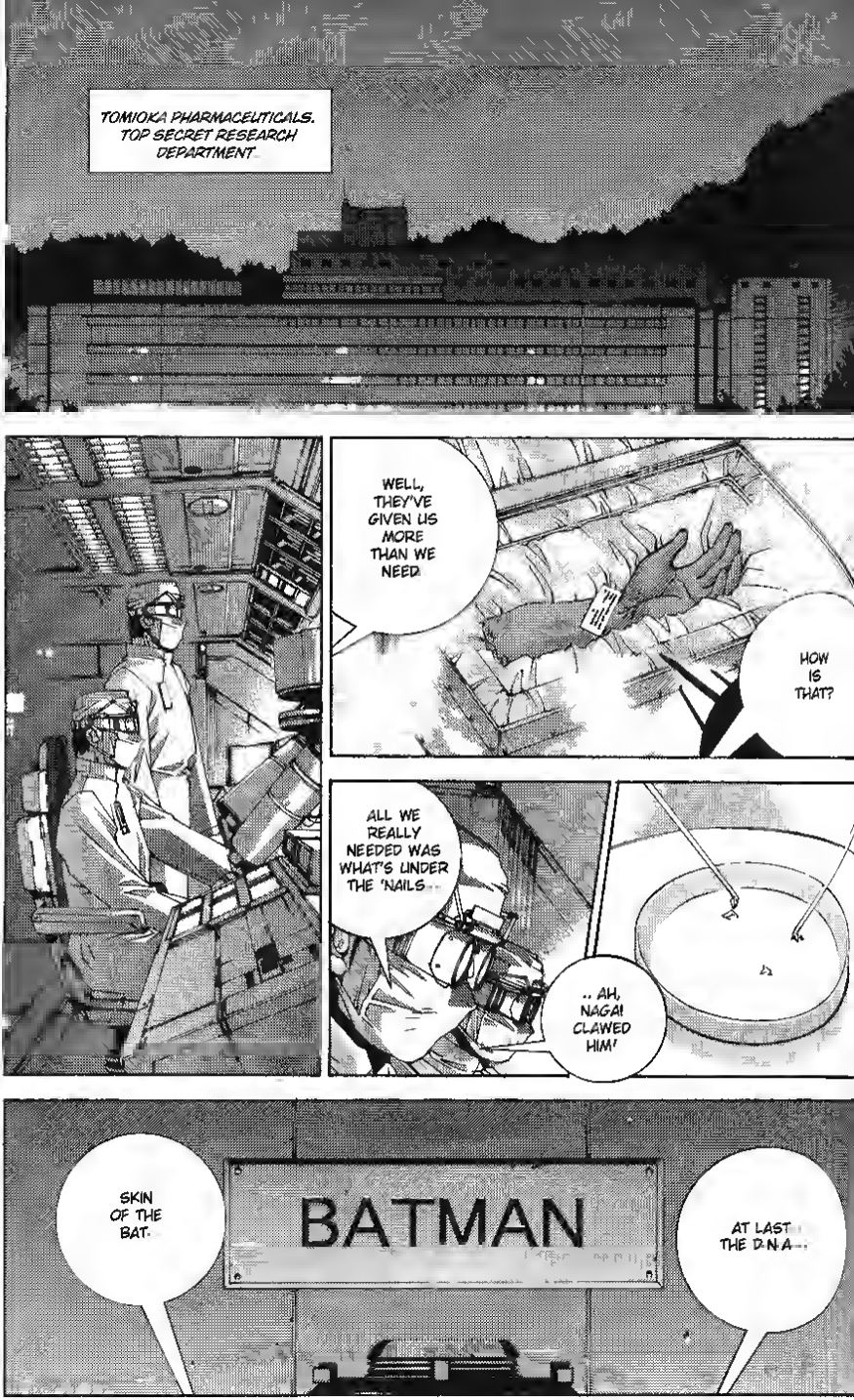
"WELL, BRUCE, NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD YOUR VISIT COVERED ON BOTH THE MORNING AND EVENING BROADCASTS--"
"--I GUESS THAT MAKES ME OFFICIALLY OLD NEWS, YUKO."
NO--YOU'RE OFFICIALLY A MEDIA SENSATION. LISTEN, THANKS FOR THIS BREAK...
MY PLEASURE, BUT IF YOUR UNCLE WAS YOUR SHOW'S SPONSOR, THEN...?
THEN WHY WAS MY SHOW CANCELED? WE WERE DISGRACED BY NAGAI'S ACTIONS... TO USE THE GOTHAM FOOTAGE, HOWEVER SENSATIONAL, WOULD BE... UNACCEPTABLE.
THAT WOULDN'T HAVE STOPPED THE U.S. MEDIA.
STILL... YOUR UNCLE COULD HAVE STEPPED IN
WHY DID IT TAKE AN OUTSIDER TO GET YOU A SECOND CHANCE?
I TOLD YOU, BRUCE, MY UNCLE AND I AREN'T CLOSE... THOUGH I'M VERY PROUD OF WHAT HE'S ACCOMPLISHED.
TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS HAS ONLY BEEN AROUND FOR FIFTEEN YEARS.
YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK, WHEN YOU'RE DOING BUSINESS WITH SOMEONE
YES... BUT I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE.

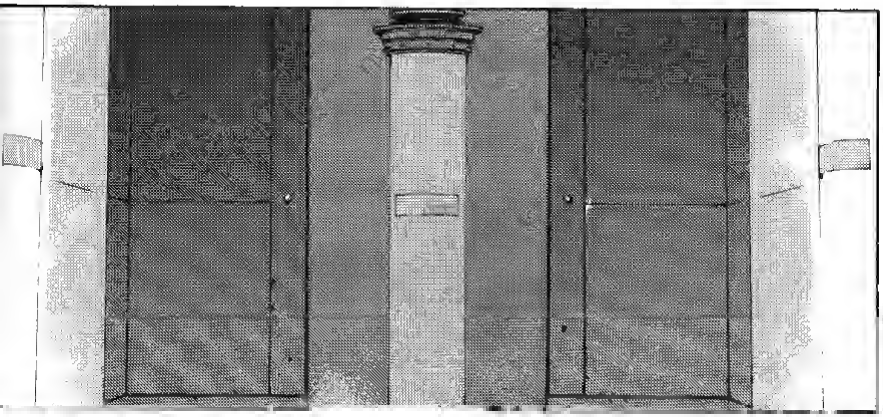
MY UNCLE KENJI IS MORE THAN JUST A BRILLIANT EXECUTIVE AND ENTREPRENEUR...
I KNOW-- HE'S ALSO A SCIENTIST.
THAT'S RIGHT-- HE STARTED OUT WHEN HE WAS JUST TWENTY-EIGHT, FORMING A SMALL COMPANY WITH OTHER IDEALISTIC YOUNG RESEARCHERS.
"TOMIOKA PHARMACY LIMITED" WAS THE FORERUNNER OF THE GREAT TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS-- AND BEFORE THAT, HE WORKED FOR ANOTHER DRUG COMPANY--
--BUT WAS FIRED AS A RESULT OF CORPORATE DOWNSIZING
WHY? WHAT IN THE HELL ARE THEY THINKING?
WE'RE NOT JUST COMPANY EMPLOYEES-- CLERKS, OR SECRETARIES OR JANITORS... WE'RE SCIENTISTS!
DOCTORS-- PROFESSORS! THE DREAMERS-- THE DOERS.
WHAT KIND OF FUTURE WILL THIS COMPANY HAVE WITHOUT US? WHAT MIRACLES WILL BE LOST FOR PROFIT'S SAKE?
THEY'RE PUSHING PILLS WHEN THEY SHOULD BE SEEKING CURES!


IF THEY'RE NOT THE CURE, THEY'RE THE DISEASE!
"MY UNCLE FOUND INVESTORS WHO BENEFITTED FROM THE DEDICATION AND BRILLIANCE OF THE TOMIOKA TEAM.
"IN ONLY FIFTEEN YEARS, TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS BECAME ONE OF THE TOP FIVE DRUG COMPANIES IN THE WORLD.
"TOMIOKA TARGETED THE MOST DIFFICULT DISEASES, RESEARCHING AND DEVELOPING NEW 'WONDER' DRUGS
"BUT THERE WERE NO SHORTCUTS--EXTENSIVE CLINICAL TESTING PRECEDED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY FINDINGS.
"CANCER AND NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES WERE HIGH ON THE TOMIOKA LIST--THESE AFFECTED THE LARGEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE...
"...AND 'CURES' FOR THEM WOULD ATTRACT THE MOST ATTENTION IN THE MEDIA AND AMONG THE PUBLIC."
HUMANITARIAN GOALS MIXED WITH FREE ENTERPRISE..
BUILDING UP THE COMPANY ENABLED YOUR UNCLE TO HELP MORE PEOPLE... AND PUT HIS FORMER EMPLOYERS OUT OF BUSINESS
OF COURSE, AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW, TOMIOKA'S GREATEST BREAKTHROUGHS HAVE BEEN IN CANCER RESEARCH...
...NOT A 'CURE,' PER SE, BUT DRUGS THAT EFFECTIVELY TREAT MANY TYPES OF CANCER.

"THESE DRUGS STOP THE SPREAD OF CERTAIN KINDS OF CANCER AND, IN SOME INSTANCES, ACTUALLY REDUCE THE CANCEROUS GROWTH--A SORT OF 'REMISSION' PILL.
"THANKS TO MY UNCLE AND HIS TEAM, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO WERE DIAGNOSED WITH TERMINAL CANCER AS LONG AS TEN YEARS AGO ARE ALIVE TODAY.
I'M FAMILIAR WITH THIS DRUG...
...BUT IT HAS YET TO PASS F.D.A. TESTING IN AMERICA.
PERHAPS WITH YOU AS HIS PARTNER, MY UNCLE WILL ACCOMPLISH THAT.
"TOMIOKA IS NOT ONLY UNAFRAID OF SUCH CHALLENGES... THE COMPANY WELCOMES IT.
TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS
"IT'S PART OF WHAT MADE THEM SUCCESSFUL HERE IN JAPAN--AND HELPED CREATE THEIR POSITIVE IMAGE."
ACTUALLY, I'M AWARE OF THAT, YUKO. AND IT'S NICE TO SEE A BIG BUSINESS THAT'S NOT AFRAID OF BEING IN THE PUBLIC EYE.
...MY RESEARCH INDICATES TOMIOKA HAS THE TRUST OF PATIENTS AND DOCTORS ALIKE...IT APPEARS TO BE A COMPANY THAT CARES ABOUT ITS CUSTOMERS

"THAT'S RIGHT, BRUCE-- THE BOARD MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVES AT TOMIOKA ARE ALL RESEARCH SCIENTISTS THEMSELVES."
"THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC HAVE NICKNAMED THEM 'THE PROFESSORS.' WHAT OTHER MAJOR COMPANY'S EXECS ARE KNOWN BY THE PUBLIC?"
IS... SOMETHING WRONG, BRUCE?
IT'S JUST THAT...YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT TOMIOKA, AND YET YOU SAY YOU AND YOUR UNCLE AREN'T CLOSE
HE'S AN IMPORTANT MAN, BRUCE... HIS FOCUS IS ON THE BIGGER PICTURE, NOT HIS NIECE...
BUT EVERY TIME I THINK HE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME, HE LETS ME KNOW HE STILL CARES...IN HIS OWN WAY...


TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS. TOP SECRET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.
WELL, THEY'VE GIVEN US MORE THAN WE NEED.
HOW IS THAT?
ALL WE REALLY NEEDED WAS WHAT'S UNDER THE 'NAILS...
.. AH, NAGA! CLAWED HIM!
SKIN OF THE BAT.
BATMAN
AT LAST. THE D.N.A...

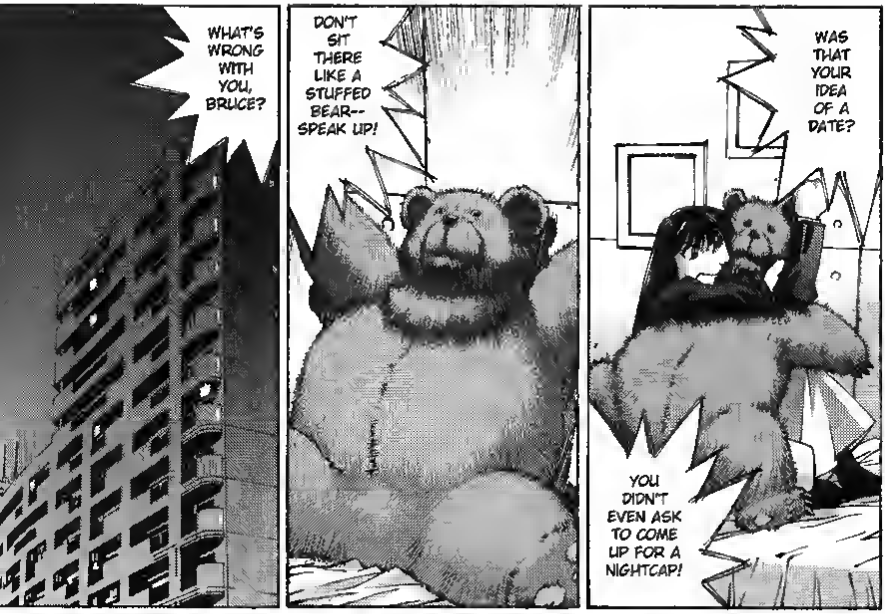


YUKO--, ANOTHER THING ABOUT YOUR UNCLE--HE LOOKS MUCH OLDER THAN..
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

JUST THIS AFTERNOON YOU TOLD ME YOU THOUGHT MY UNCLE WAS OBSESSED WITH BATMAN..
...NOW I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL YOU'RE JUST AS OBSESSED WITH HIM!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND...

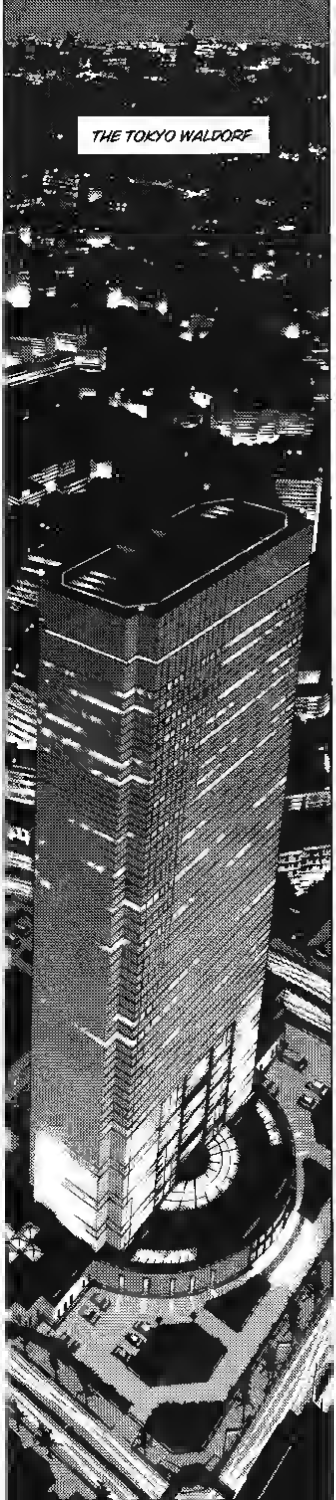
THAT SEEMS TO BE ALL YOU ASK ABOUT..I WAS HOPING WE'D GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER..
...AND ALL YOU'RE GETTING TO KNOW IS MY UNCLE!
I--I'M SORRY, YUKO--

IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY FOR BOTH OF US WOULD YOU MIND DROPPING ME AT MY APARTMENT?

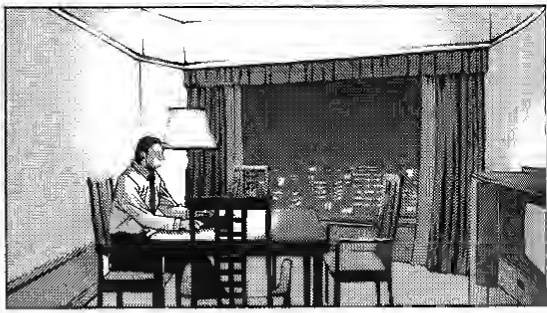

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, BRUCE?
DON'T SIT THERE LIKE A STUFFED BEAR-- SPEAK UP!
WAS THAT YOUR IDEA OF A DATE?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN ASK TO COME UP FOR A NIGHTCAP!

YOU...
...ALL YOU DID WAS TALK ABOUT WORK.

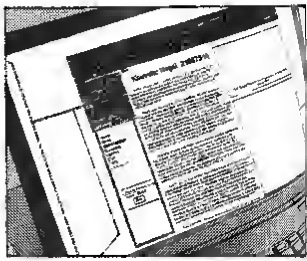
IF I'D WANTED AN INTERVIEW, I'D HAVE BROUGHT A CAMERA CREW ALONG... NOTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF, BRUCE?

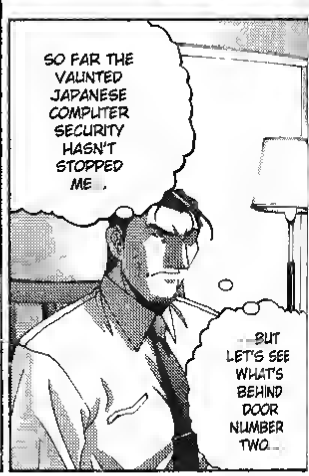

THE TOKYO WALDORF

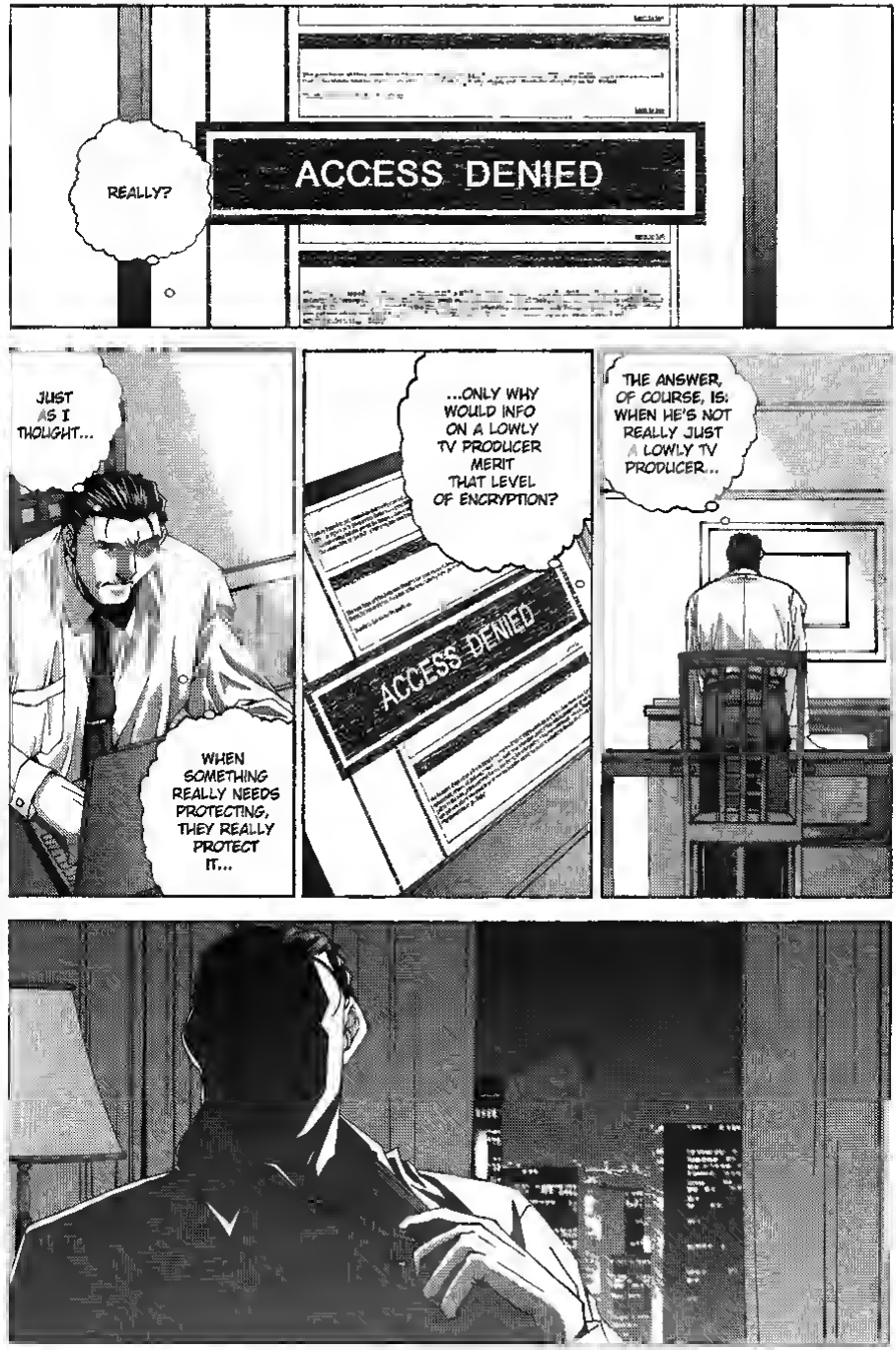
IMPERIAL SUITE

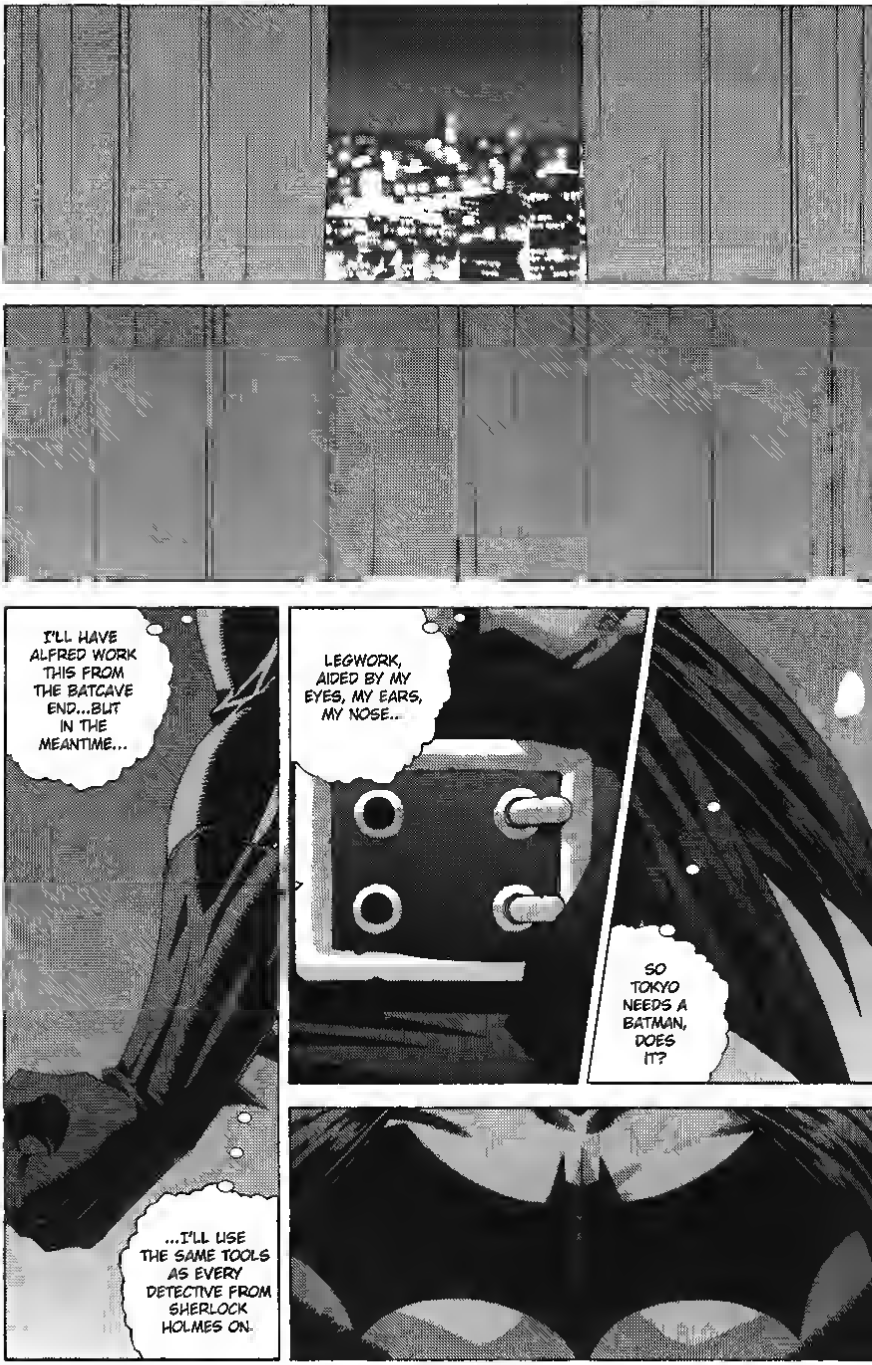


"NAGAI... PRODUCER AT KANTO TELEVISION..."
HMMMM.




SO FAR THE VAUNTED JAPANESE COMPUTER SECURITY HASN'T STOPPED ME.
...BUT LET'S SEE WHAT'S BEHIND DOOR NUMBER TWO...

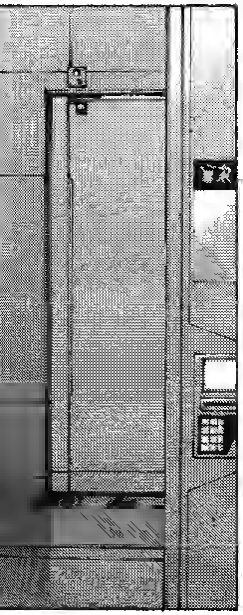

REALLY?
ACCESS DENIED
JUST AS I THOUGHT...
WHEN SOMETHING REALLY NEEDS PROTECTING, THEY REALLY PROTECT IT...
...ONLY WHY WOULD INFO ON A LOWLY TV PRODUCER MERIT THAT LEVEL OF ENCRYPTION?
ACCESS DENIED
THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS: WHEN HE'S NOT REALLY JUST A LOWLY TV PRODUCER...

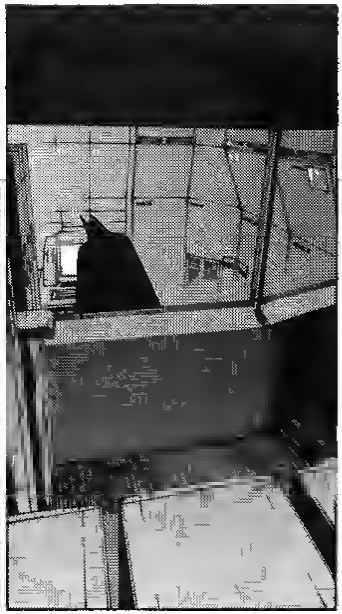

I'LL HAVE ALFRED WORK THIS FROM THE BATCAVE END...BUT IN THE MEANTIME...
...I'LL USE THE SAME TOOLS AS EVERY DETECTIVE FROM SHERLOCK HOLMES ON.
LEGWORK, AIDED BY MY EYES, MY EARS, MY NOSE...
SO TOKYO NEEDS A BATMAN, DOES IT?

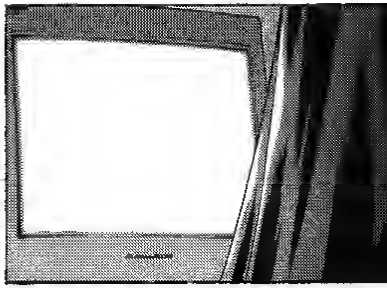
WELL, NOW IT HAS ONE.
歌舞伎町一番街
PRONTO

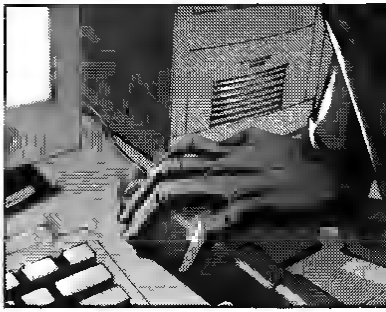
OF COURSE, THE WAY I WORK, THEY MAY NEVER REALIZE IT!

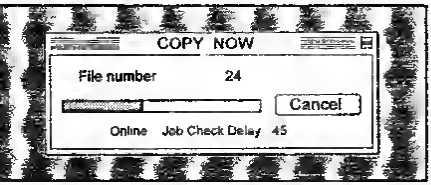
SO NAGAI WAS HEAVILY IN DEBT... BUT AMONG HIS FEW ASSETS...
...WAS A POLICY ON HIS LIFE HELD HERE AT GOKOKUJI INSURANCE
A HIGH-END COMPANY LIKE GOKOKUJI IS SURE TO HAVE SOPHISTICATED SECURITY, BUT I'LL JUST HAVE TO RISK IT..
...I NEED TO KNOW HOW MUCH THAT POLICY IS WORTH...
—AND THEY SHOULD HAVE MORE PERSONAL INFO ON OUR LATE PRODUCER.







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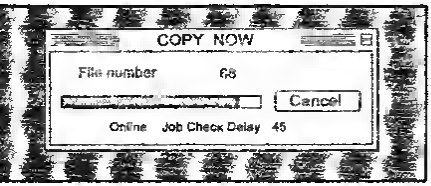
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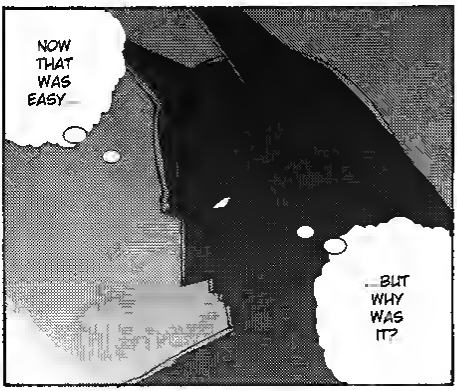
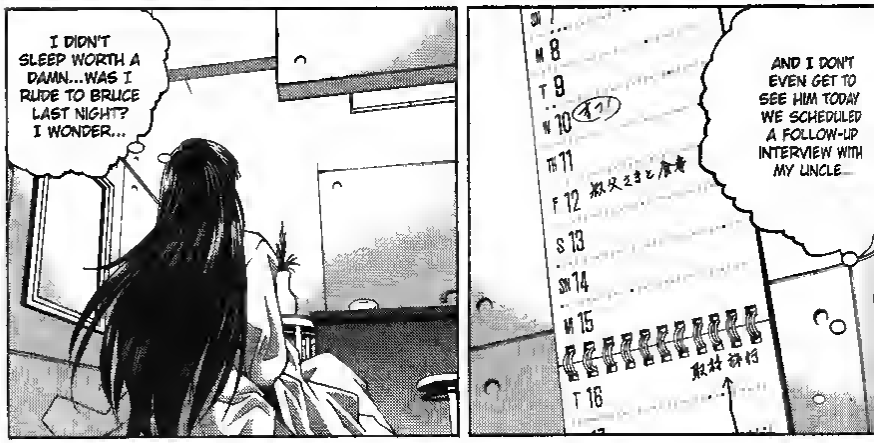
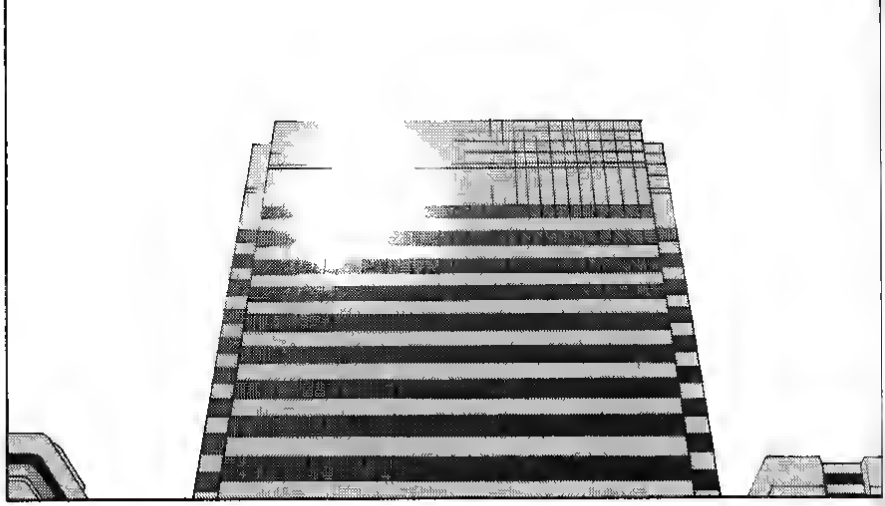
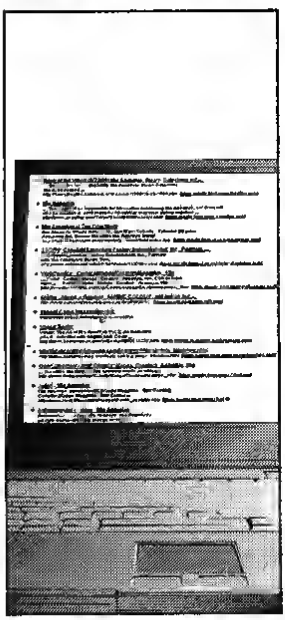

NOW THAT WAS EASY...
...BUT WHY WAS IT?

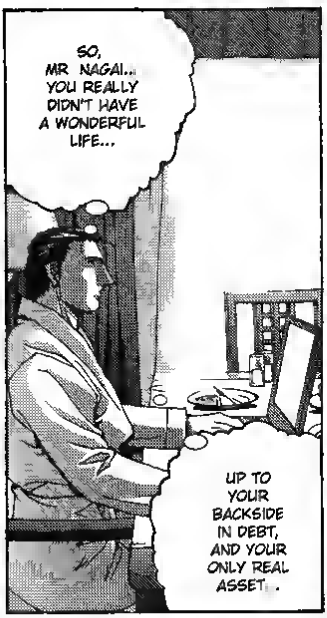
BRRINNG!
OKAY, OKAY, OKAY...
I'M UP


I DIDN'T SLEEP WORTH A DAMN...WAS I RUDE TO BRUCE LAST NIGHT? I WONDER...
AND I DON'T EVEN GET TO SEE HIM TODAY WE SCHEDULED A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW WITH MY UNCLE...

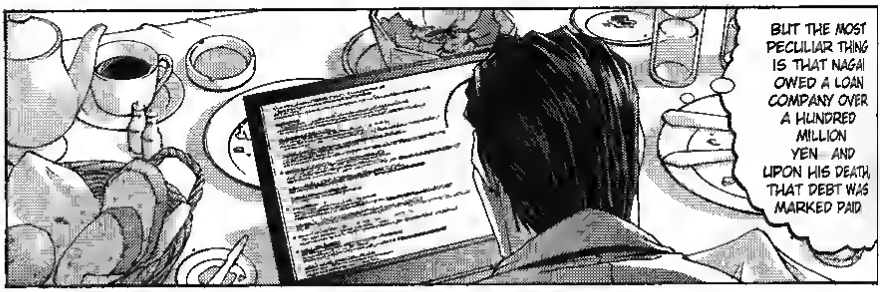
NICE OF UNCLE KENJI TO CONSENT TO SEEING ME... HE'S BEEN SO COOPERATIVE...
!!!
GOOD MORNING, MS. YAGI. MR. TOMIOKA SENT ME TO PICK YOU UP.
HOW THOUGHTFUL OF HIM...
WELL... THANK YOU.
WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE, GETTING THIS KIND OF ATTENTION FROM MY UNCLE...






SO, MR NAGAI... YOU REALLY DIDN'T HAVE A WONDERFUL LIFE...
UP TO YOUR BACKSIDE IN DEBT, AND YOUR ONLY REAL ASSET .

.. A LIFE INSURANCE POLICY WORTH A COOL HUNDRED MILLION YEN.
SO DID YOU HAVE A TERMINAL DISEASE? WERE YOU ON A SUICIDE MISSION TO PROVIDE YOUR FAMILY WITH RICHES?


BUT THE MOST PECULIAR THING IS THAT NAGAI OWED A LOAN COMPANY OVER A HUNDRED MILLION YEN... AND UPON HIS DEATH, THAT DEBT WAS MARKED PAID

BUT WHO PAID OFF THAT LOAN? HOW IS IT POSSIBLE, WHEN THE INSURANCE MONEY HASN'T BEEN PAID OUT YET?
AH...TWO COMMON NAMES BETWEEN BOARDS...
NOW LET'S CHECK THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS...
LET'S CHECK THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF BOTH THE LOAN COMPANY AND GOKOKUJI INSURANCE...
TWO MORE NAMES IN COMMON!
...WELL! BOTH THE LOAN COMPANY AND THE GOKOKUJI ARE TOMIOKA SUBSIDIARIES!
BUT WHY HAVEN'T THEY GONE TO MORE TROUBLE HIDING THESE CONNECTIONS?

UNNNHH..

...WHAT?...
...WHERE...?
...BACK IN MY OWN APARTMENT
...HOW DID I GET HERE?
"I REMEMBER HAVING DINNER WITH MY UNCLE—
"HE WAS VERY KIND, INTERESTED IN ME AND MY WORK..."
I REMEMBER NOT FEELING WELL...
FUNNY... I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA!
"BUT THEN.. IT'S A BLUR... AND AFTER THAT... A BLANK..."

I DON'T REMEMBER A THING...
WAS IT TOO MUCH WINE?
MAYBE THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THIS SPLITTING HEADACHE...
MAYBE...
Yuka
WHAT'S THIS-- A GIFT?
"YOU FELL ASLEEP IN THE LIMO AFTER DINNER. YOU'D SAID YOU FELT YOU WERE CATCHING THE FLU, SO I DECIDED NOT TO DISTURB YOU. MY MAN BROUGHT YOU HOME."
MY UNCLE'S HAND-WRITING...
"I GAVE YOU A SEDATIVE BY INJECTION TO HELP YOU SLEEP SOUNDLY. UNTIL I FIND THE CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD, A FULL DAY'S REST IS THE BEST MEDICINE.
"YOU SHOULD FEEL BETTER WHEN YOU AWAKEN. YOUR LOVING UNCLE, KENJI."
NICE TO FINALLY GET SOME AFFECTION FROM YOU, UNC...
...BUT I'M AWAKE NOW, AND I'VE NEVER FELT WORSE.

MAYBE UNCLE KENJI'S GIFT'LL BE THE ANTIDOTE...
FUNNY...
I DON'T REMEMBER EVER RECEIVING A GIFT FROM HIM BEFORE..
BUT I'M NOT BEING FAIR TO HIM...HE'S A GREAT AND HONORABLE MAN... WHO WORKS TO BENEFIT ALL MANKIND...

WELL...
I'D NEVER IMAGINE A GIFT LIKE THIS FROM UNCLE KENJI...
CLOTHES OF SOME KIND...WHAT A LOVELY SHADE OF BLUE-GRAY...
!!ZZZZZZZO
WHO...?
COMING! JUST A MOMENT.

MISS YUKO YAGI?
YES?
SIGN HERE, PLEASE.
CERTAINLY...
ANOTHER GIFT FROM MY UNCLE!
"MY DEAR NIECE...I THOUGHT A LITTLE COMPANY MIGHT CHEER YOU UP. LOVE, UNCLE KENJI."
MEOW!
HUH?
MY UNCLE SENT ME...
...A CAT?
OH!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
I FEEL SO STRANGE...
SO DIZZY...

WELCOME TO TODAY'S TELECONFERENCE, GENTLEMEN...
I TRUST YOU FOUND MY LITTLE GOTHAM CITY MELODRAMA BOTH ENTERTAINING AND INSTRUCTIONAL
AND WE'VE GOT AN EQUALLY STIMULATING EVENT SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SHORTLY— RIGHT HERE IN TOKYO
BUT PLEASE REMEMBER, THIS IS JUST ANOTHER, ALBEIT STIMULATING, PHASE OF OUR TESTING PROCESS...
WHEN THESE TRIALS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND WE ARE READY TO ENTER INTO PRODUCTION...
..YOU WILL FIND D.N.A.-BEL CAPABLE OF NUMEROUS APPLICATIONS..
...APPLICATIONS THAT WILL MAKE CURES FOR CANCER ROUTINE IN THE FUTURE, THEREBY RELEGATING RECENT EFFORTS IN CLONING TO THE BIOTECH SCRAP HEAP.
BUT FOR NOW
...WITNESS D.N.A.-BEL IN ALL ITS PERFECTED GLORY...

"SO CONFIDENT AM I, GENTLEMEN, IN ITS POTENTIAL, THAT I WILL PRESENT YOU WITH A LIVE BROADCAST OF THIS FIELD TEST..."
MEEE-OOOW!
WHAT A PURRR-FECT NIGHT FOR PROWLING..

THE FUNERAL OF KOSAKU NAGAI...
NO FAMILIAR FACES HERE...
NAGAI'S CAMERA CREW, AND TOMIOKA AND HIS PEOPLE ARE KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE...
...AND WHY NOT? NAGAI WAS JUST A PAWN.
THE QUESTION IS: AM I A PAWN, TOO?

HUH!
MEOW!
WHOSE LITTLE KITTY ARE YOU?
RUNNING WITH A GANG, I SEE...
HMM... SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...
...FEELS ALARMINGLY FAMILIAR...

HELLO BATMAN... SURPRISED TO SEE ME?

NOT REALLY. SINCE YOU TELEGRAPHED YOUR APPEARANCE BY A MILE. WHICH ALMOST BEGS THE QUESTION...
...ARE YOU THE REAL CATWOMAN...
...OR JUST A DRUGGED-UP COPY?

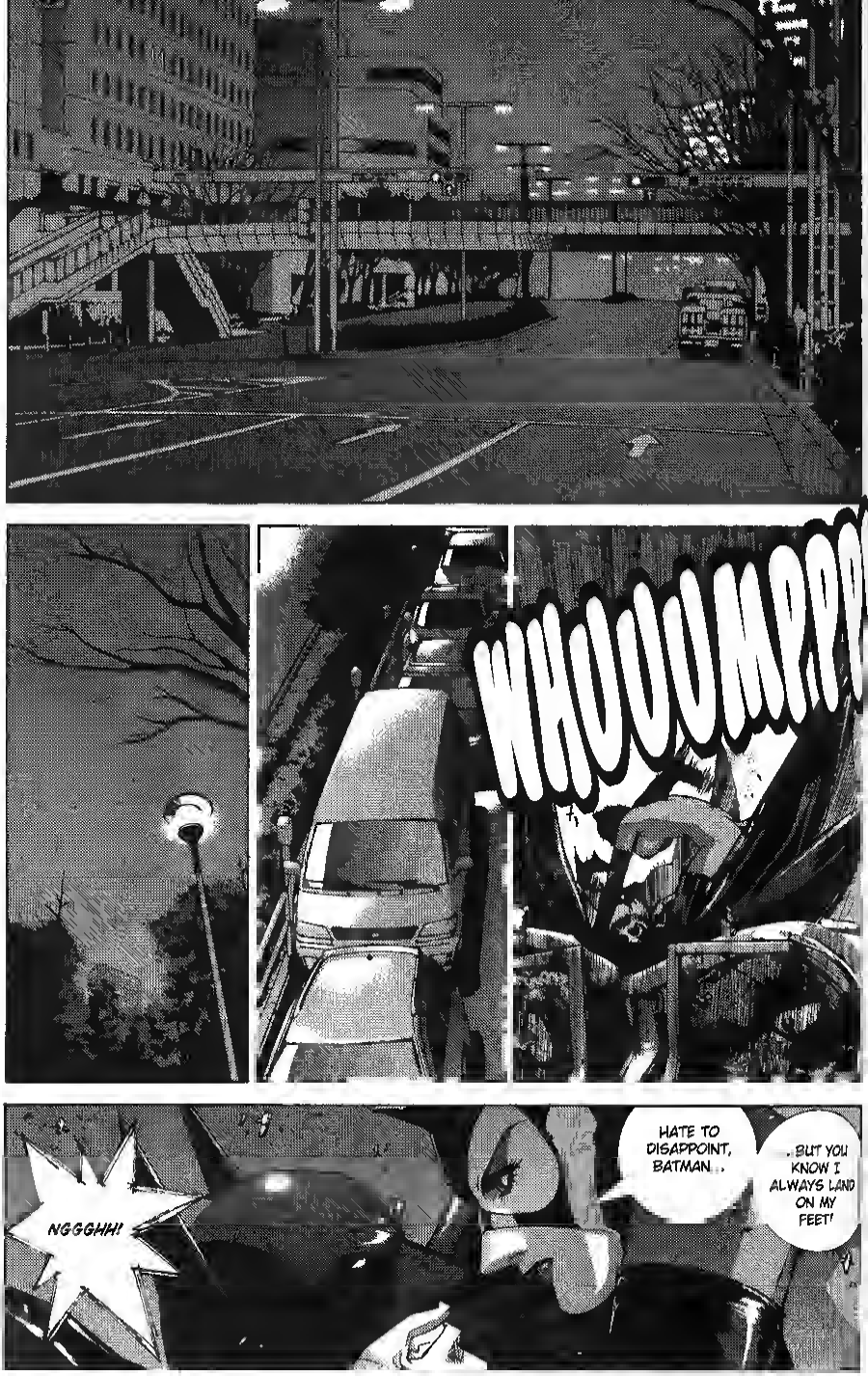
IS THAT YOU, SELINA?
SHRIKKK
DECIDE FOR YOUSELF, BATMAN!
SHOOOSSSSHH
THAT WAS CLOSE...
SHE'S AS FAST AS THE GENUINE article...JUST AS NIMBLE...
...BUT THERE'S NO REASON IN THE WORLD THAT THE CATWOMAN WOULD STRAY THIS FAR FROM GOTHAM...
...AND IT'S EQUALLY UNLIKELY THAT THE FLOOD OF DOPPELGANGER VILLAINS WOULD SUBSIDE NOW THAT I'M IN TOKYO!

TIME TO SEE WHAT *ELSE* SHE'S GOT...
WILL SHE FOLLOW?
OF COURSE SHE WOULD-- SHE'S MIMICKING THE REAL CATWOMAN'S MOVES TO PERFECTION...
WHAT'S WRONG, BATMAN? CAN'T STAND THE HEAT?

THEN GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN!
WOKKK!
BYE-BYE LOVE!
KLOKK
WSHHHHH
!!GENTLES

WHUNK!
HUH?
FOR A DRUG-INDUCED PARODY, SHE PACKS A HELL OF A WALLOP...
TUNK
TUNK
TUNK
TUNK
WINDOW WASHERS IN CAPES AND COSTUMES...
WHAT'LL THEY THINK OF NEXT...?
TRUCE... LET'S TALK.

YOU'RE BEING USED... YOU THINK YOU'RE THE CATWOMAN, BUT YOU'RE REALLY A HUMAN GUINEA PIG.
COME WITH ME, AND WE'LL GET YOU HELP--AND STOP THE ONE WHO--
SO...IT TURNS OUT BATS HAVE NINE LIVES, TOO! LET'S RELIEVE YOU OF ANOTHER OF YOURS...
OH HELL...
THOSE CLAWS...!
RAZOR SHARP...!
SLASHHH!!
"AND IF THEY CAN SHRED MY CAPE... THINK HOW FLESH WOULD FARE!"


WHOOOMPP
NGGGHH!
HATE TO DISAPPOINT, BATMAN...
...BUT YOU KNOW I ALWAYS LAND ON MY FEET!

LET'S SEE HOW YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE FLAT ON YOUR BA--
TWIP
tok
THE CARBON'S BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL...
.. AND MORE DANGEROUS.
READY FOR THE TASTE OF MY WHIP BATMAN?

KRAAK!
SLA
KRAAK!
KRRUNCH-
RAK!!
SNAAP!!
WHUNK!
WHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

WHAT...? WHERE'D SHE GO?
WHERE THE HELL IS SHE?
TOLD YOU... ON MY FEET.
WHAAM
THAT'S ENOUGH!

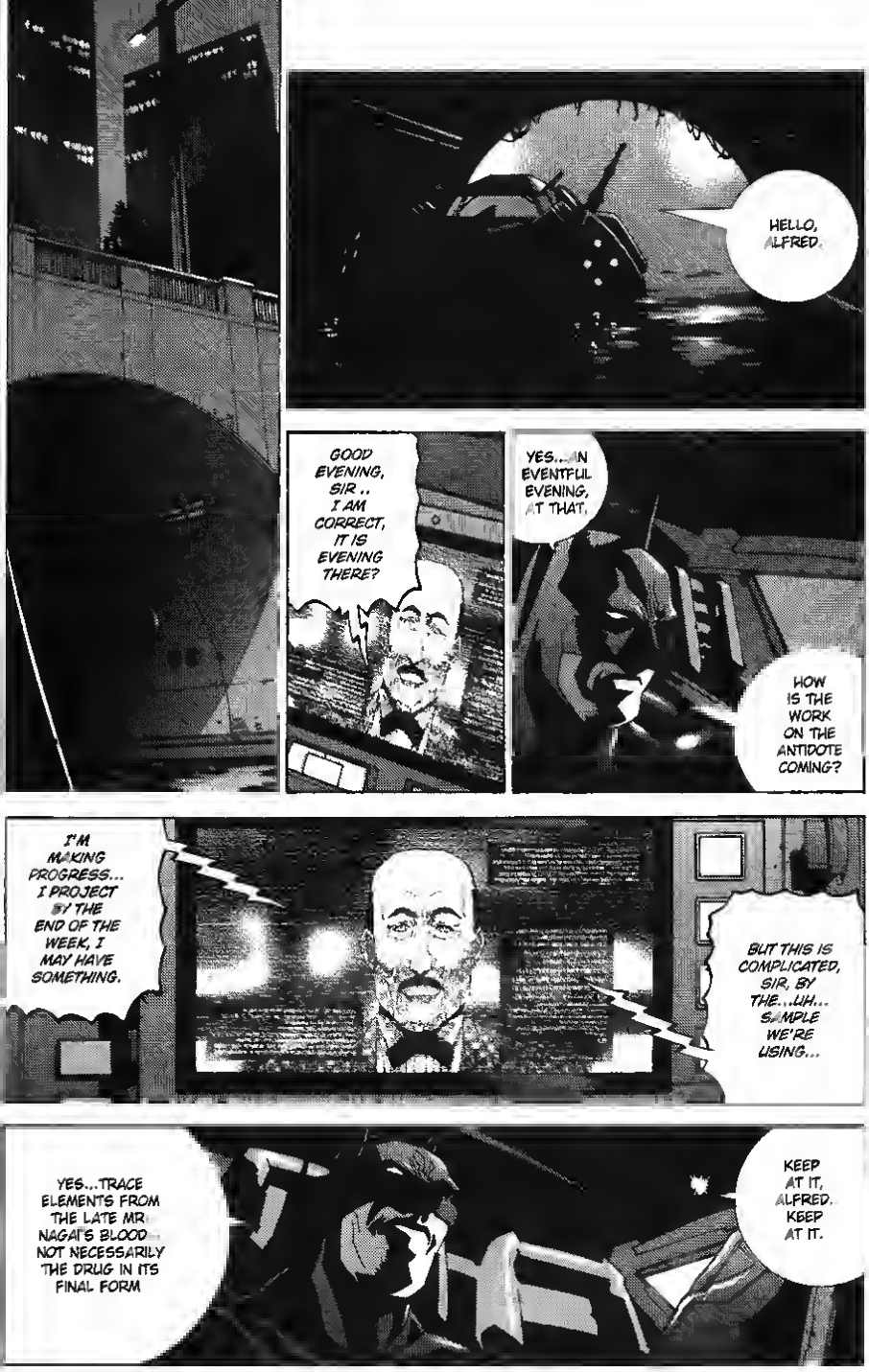
WHAMP!
GOT YOU!
I THOUGHT YOU'D COME TO THAT CONCLUSION— EVENTUALLY—
OHMI-GOD--!
SCRREEEE!!

EEE
EEECHHHHH!!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOIN' THERE? GET OUTTA THE WAY!
OH GOD... DID I HIT HER?... LADY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OH.. YOU'RE OKAY
LOTSA LIVES LEFT!
SHAKK
WHUMP!!
UGKK!
NOW... BATMAN... WHERE WERE WE... BEFORE WE WERE...
SO RUDELY...

...INTERRUPTED--?
HE... HE'S GONE?
FRIGHTENED OFF... OR PLANNING... HIS NEXT... MOVE?

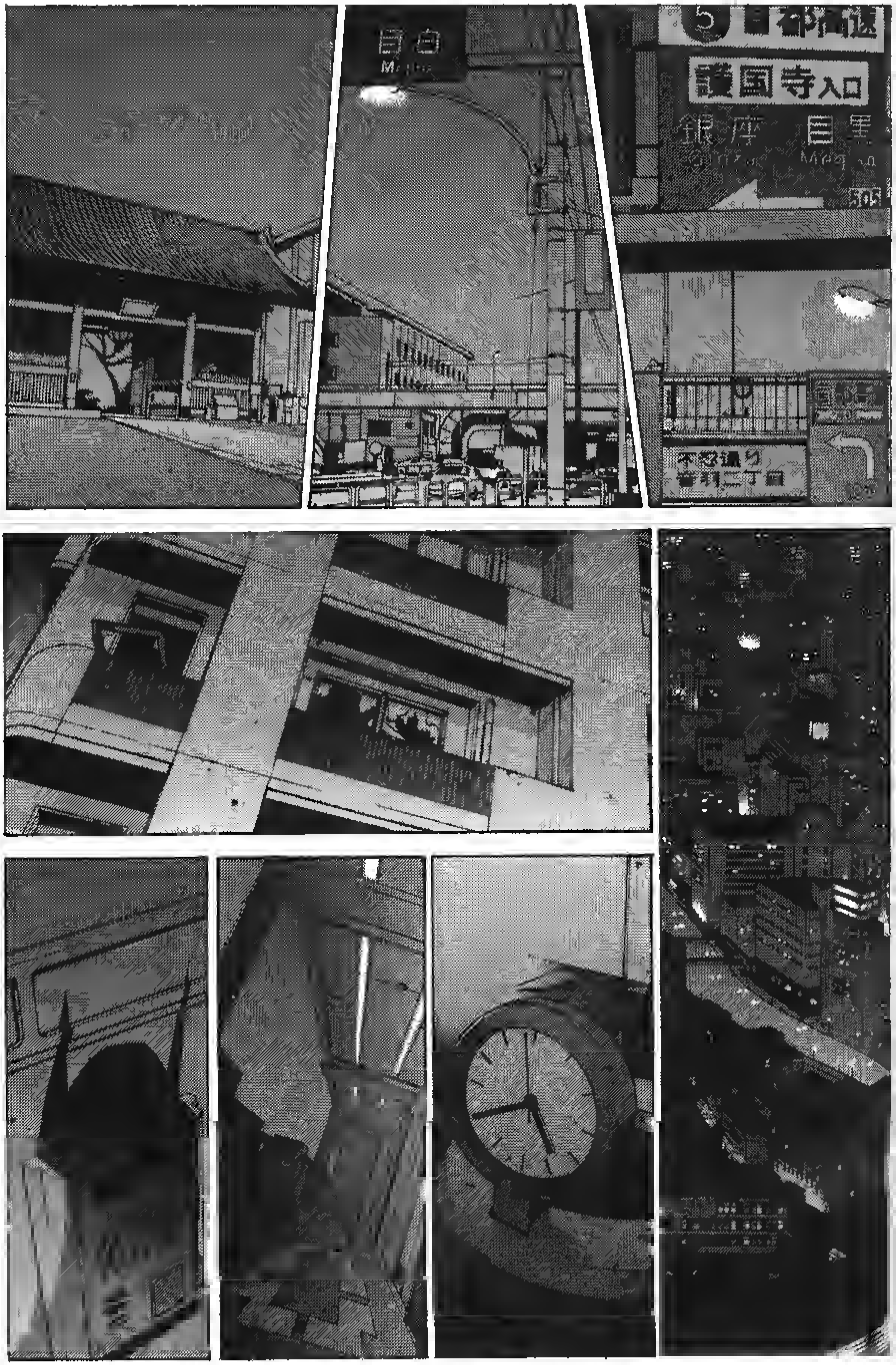
IT'S JUST... JUST AS WELL...
I--I'M SUDDENLY... FEELING...
STRANGELY... WINDED...

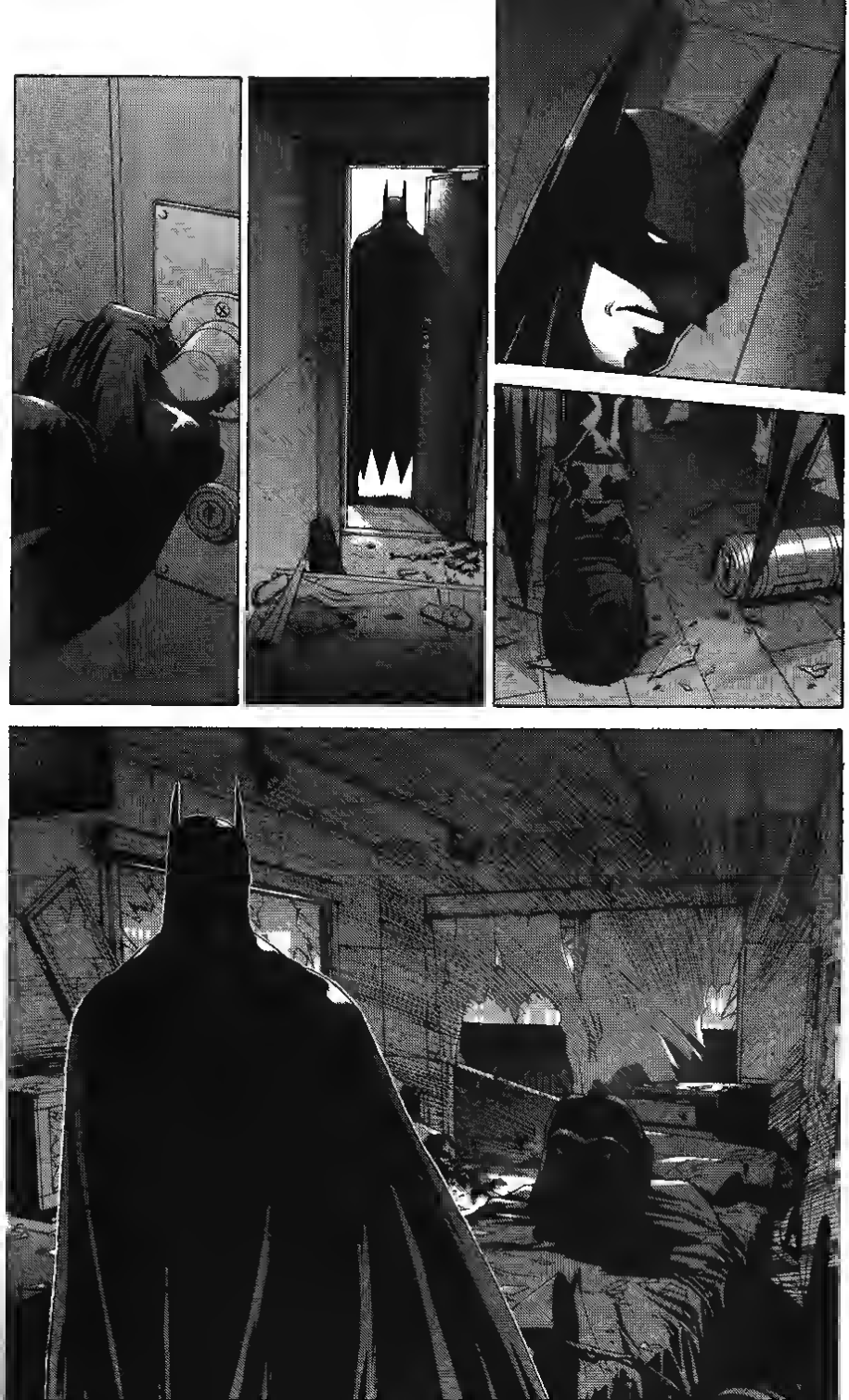
TIME... TIME TO HEAD BACK... TO THE DEN...
WHERE THE BAT... WILL NEVER... FIND ME...


HELLO, ALFRED.
GOOD EVENING, SIR .. I AM CORRECT, IT IS EVENING THERE?
YES...AN EVENTFUL EVENING, AT THAT.
HOW IS THE WORK ON THE ANTIDOTE COMING?
I'M MAKING PROGRESS... I PROJECT BY THE END OF THE WEEK, I MAY HAVE SOMETHING.
BUT THIS IS COMPLICATED, SIR, BY THE...UH... SAMPLE WE'RE USING...
YES...TRACE ELEMENTS FROM THE LATE MR NAGAI'S BLOOD... NOT NECESSARILY THE DRUG IN ITS FINAL FORM
KEEP AT IT, ALFRED. KEEP AT IT.

"THIS 'CATWOMAN'... WITHOUT THAT ANTIDOTE...
"...SHE'LL END UP A MUMMY...
".. OR MAD... OR BOTH."
WITHOUT THAT ANTIDOTE IN MY GRASP...
...I CAN ONLY HOPE IT ALREADY EXISTS ELSEWHERE.
AND THE ONLY PLACE THAT COULD BE IS WHERE THE DRUG WAS PRODUCED
FIRST, LET'S CHECK ON THE HOMING DEVICE I PLANTED ON THE 'CATWOMAN' AND SEE WHERE SHE'S GONE...
HMM— SHE'S IN MEJIRO

...THAT'S YUKO'S NEIGHBOR-HOOD!
WOULD HE USE.. HIS OWN NIECE?
VRROOMMM!!
THE FIEND!


護国寺入口
銀座 目黒



UNNH
UNNH
UNNH
UNNH
UNNH
UNNH

WHO...
WHO... ARE YOU?
...AM I?
YOU'RE YUKO YAGI-- BUT YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF.
YOU'VE BEEN DRUGGED... LET ME HELP.
NOT... ME?
...HELP?
YUKO, NO!
RRRRR

RRARRGGGHHHH!!
DON'T DO THIS!
CHOK!
STOP IT!
YUKO--THINK! REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!
RARRGHHHHHH--

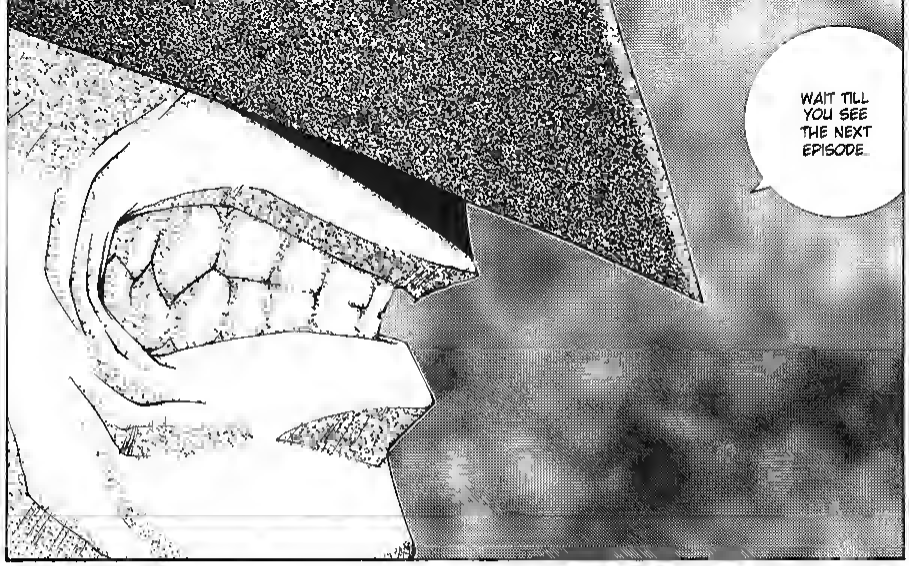
WHO...?
AM...?
I...?
YOU'RE YUKO YAGI! YUKO!
YUKO... TIME TO WAKE UP...
...SHAKE OFF THIS BAD DREAM.
tippp
I-- I'M--. YUKO?

I'M YUKO... AND YOU'RE...
STAY QUIET, YUKO... WAIT HERE FOR ME.
YOU SAVED MY LIFE AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?... BUT THIS TIME... I CAN THANK YOU...

UNNHH..
I...DID I ATTACK YOU? DID I DREAM THAT, OR...?
UNNHH...
YOU WERE DRUGGED...
I BELIEVE BY YOUR UNCLE.
UNCLE KENJI?
UNNHH..
UNNHH...
THE SAME AS THE THE OTHERS?
POSSIBLY WITH A PERFECTED VERSION I DON'T BELIEVE HE'D HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT AN ANTIDOTE
AT LEAST-- THAT'S WHAT I'M PRAYING
I'M GOING TO GET THAT ANTIDOTE...
I WAS THE BAIT... DON'T GO INTO HIS TRAP...

IT'S A LOST CAUSE... I'M GOING TO DIE, ANYWAY...
NO YOU'RE NOT.
I WON'T ALLOW THAT, YUKO...
...REST

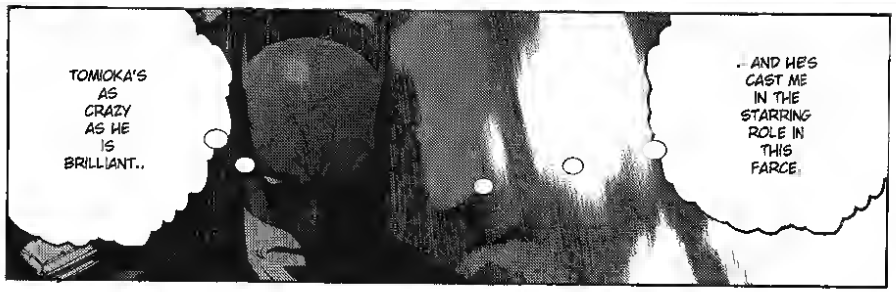
ME-
OOOW.
MRRR-
OOW...
WATCHING ME AGAIN, ARE YOU? ENJOYING THE SHOW?
CRNNNCHHH!


WAIT TILL YOU SEE THE NEXT EPISODE...

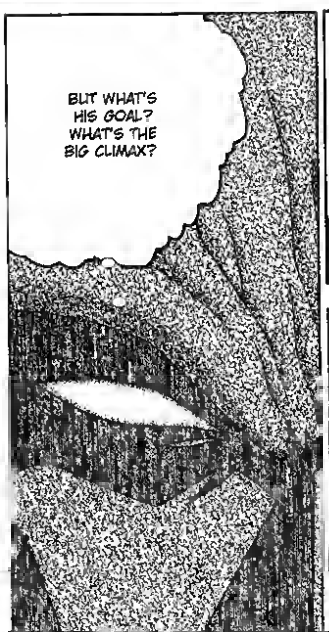
NOW THAT'S ENTERTAIN-MENT...

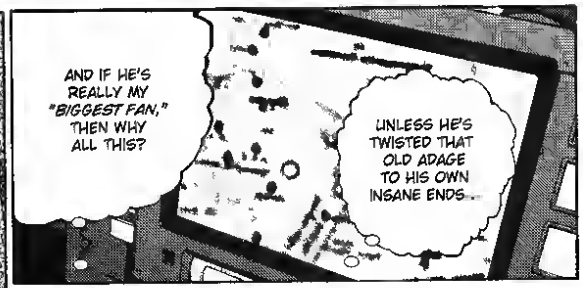
...WHERE ART AND SCIENCE BECOME ONE...
...ND DREAMS BECOME REALITY!

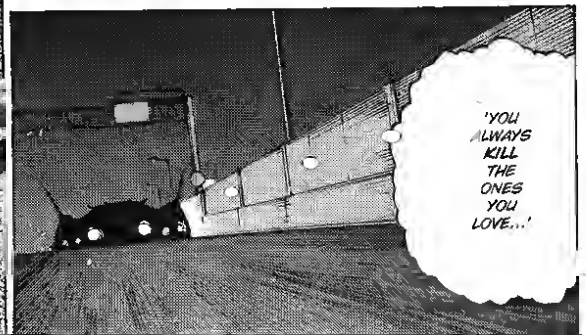
WWRR
RROOOO
OOOOMM!!


TOMIOKA'S AS CRAZY AS HE IS BRILLIANT..
..AND HE'S CAST ME IN THE STARRING ROLE IN THIS FARCE.

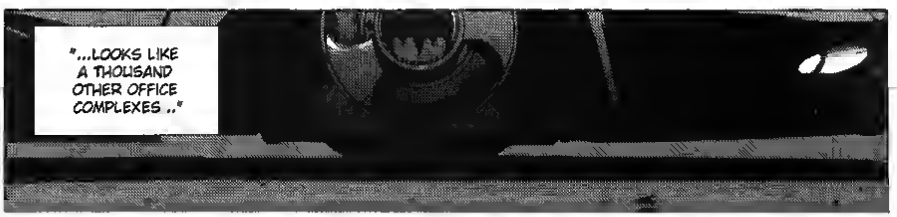
NO QUESTION, HE'S THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BEHIND IT ALL...
NO QUESTION I'M STORMING INTO A TRAP EITHER...


BUT WHAT'S HIS GOAL? WHAT'S THE BIG CLIMAX?


AND IF HE'S REALLY MY "BIGGEST FAN," THEN WHY ALL THIS?
UNLESS HE'S TWISTED THAT OLD ADAGE TO HIS OWN INSANE ENDS...

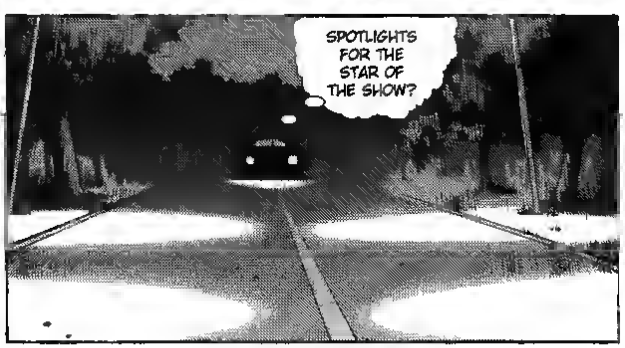

'YOU ALWAYS KILL THE ONES YOU LOVE...'

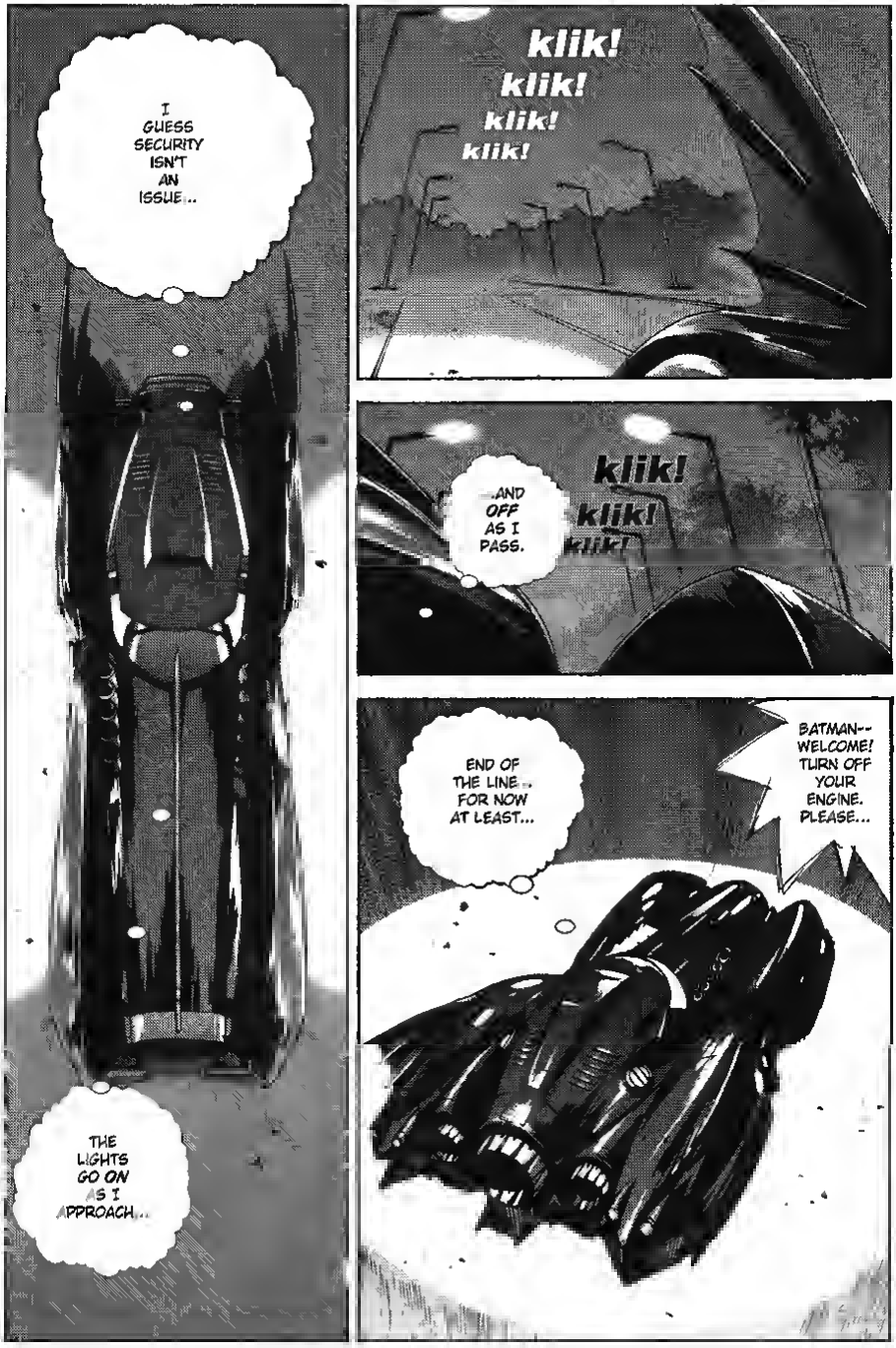
"KENJI TOMIOKA'S HOME...AND THAT BUILDING BEYOND...

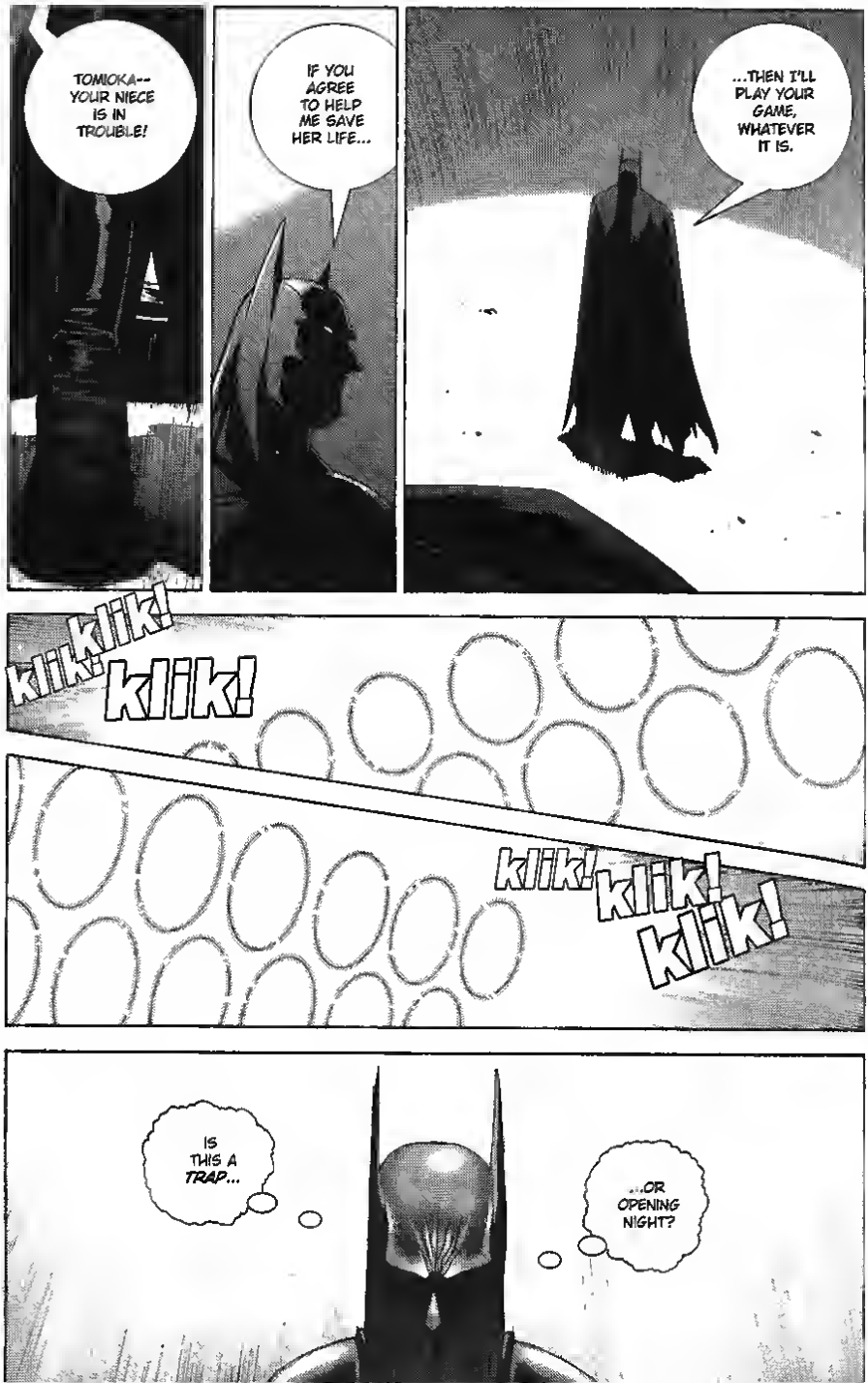

"...LOOKS LIKE A THOUSAND OTHER OFFICE COMPLEXES.."

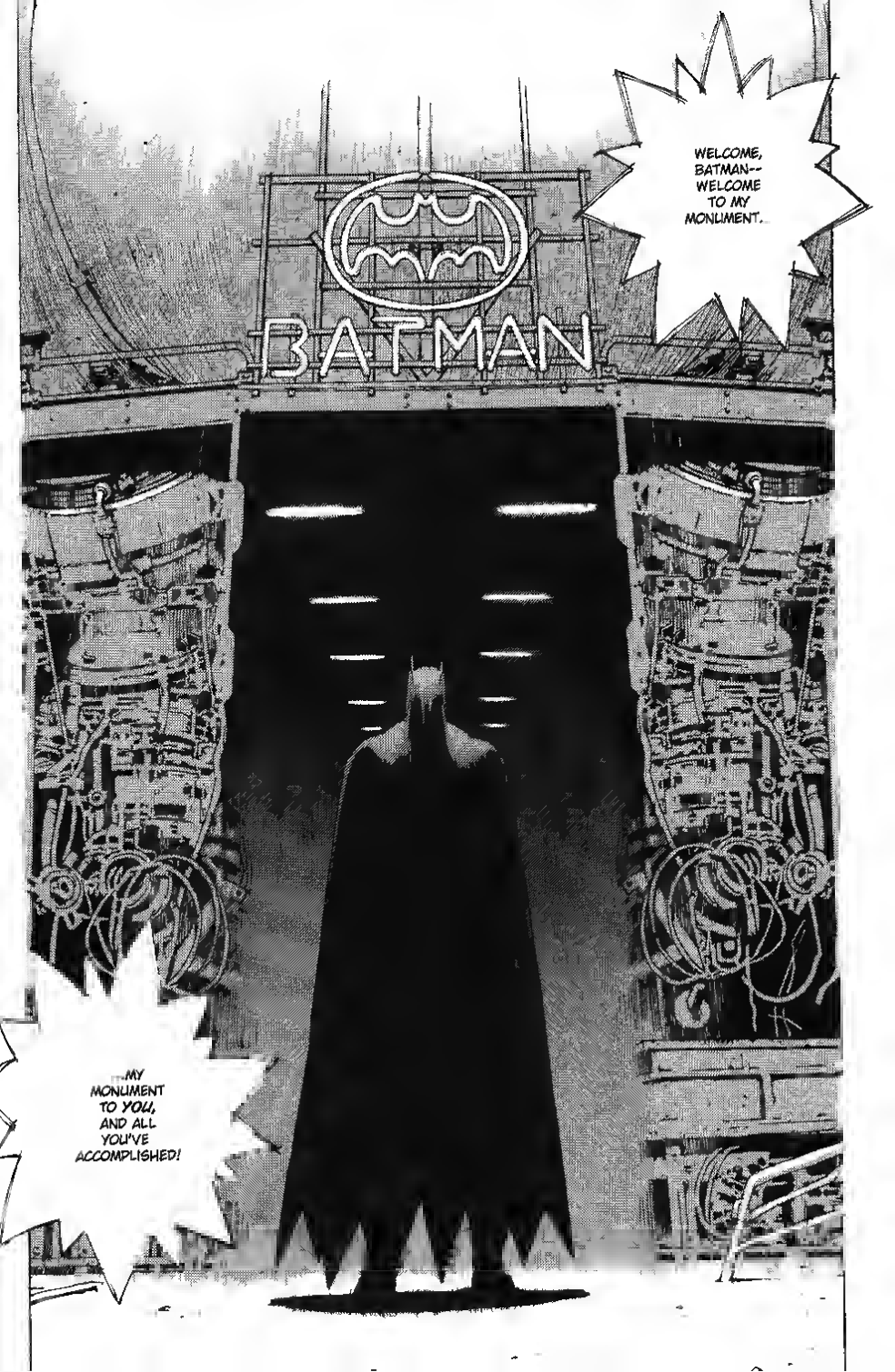
...COULD IT BE A LABORATORY? A PRIVATE FACILITY?

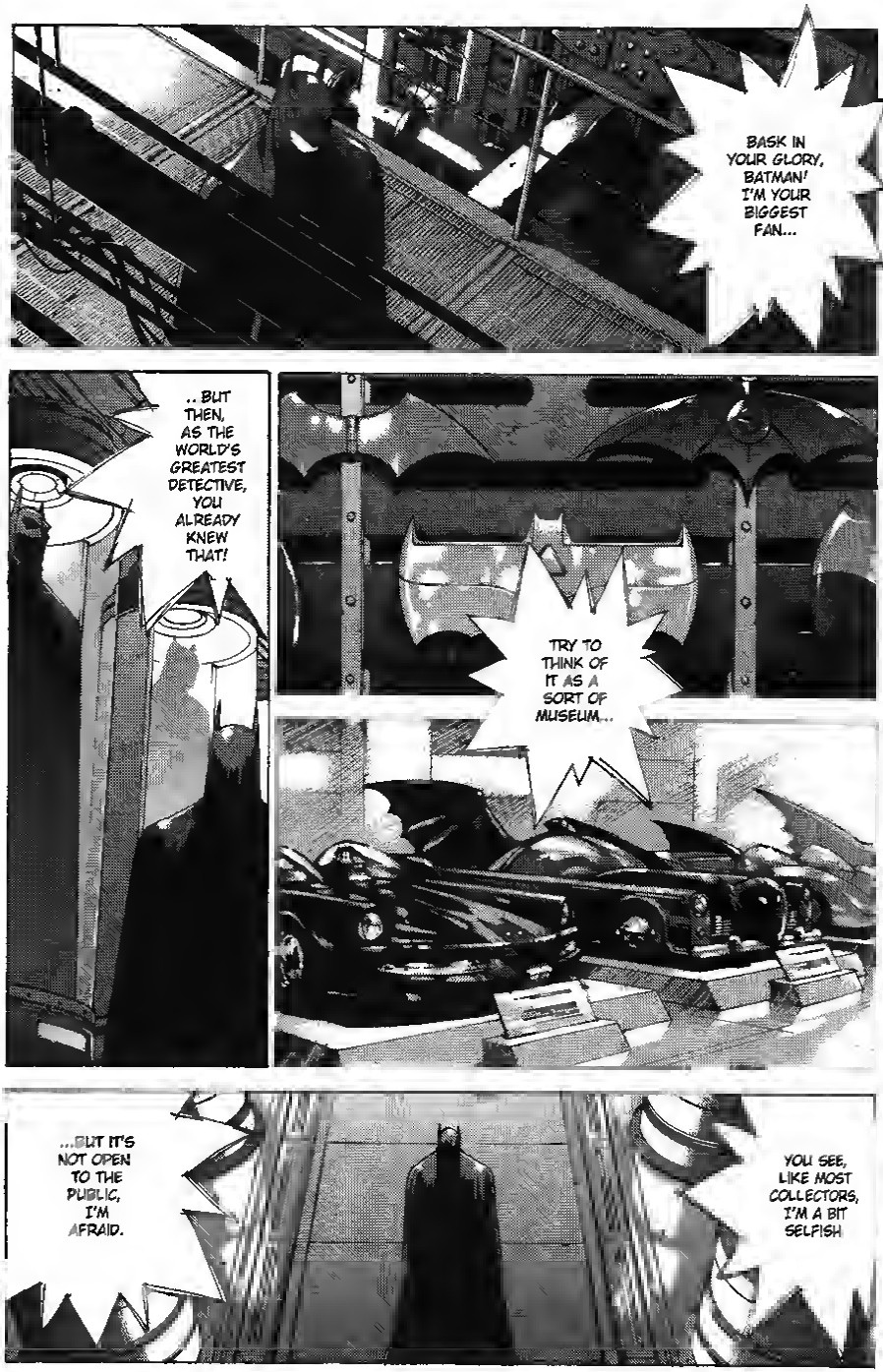
KLIK!
KLIK!
KLIK!
KLIK!


SPOTLIGHTS FOR THE STAR OF THE SHOW?


I GUESS SECURITY ISN'T AN ISSUE...
THE LIGHTS GO ON AS I APPROACH...
klik!
klik!
klik!
klik!
..AND OFF AS I PASS.
klik!
klik!
klik!
END OF THE LINE... FOR NOW AT LEAST...
BATMAN-- WELCOME! TURN OFF YOUR ENGINE. PLEASE...

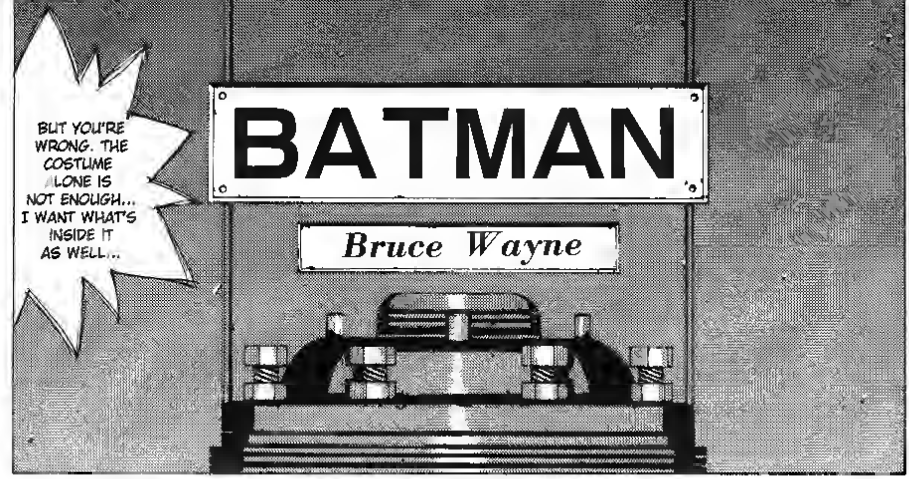

TOMIOKA--
YOUR NIECE
IS IN
TROUBLE!
IF YOU
AGREE
TO HELP
ME SAVE
HER LIFE...
...THEN I'LL
PLAY YOUR
GAME,
WHATEVER
IT IS.
klik!
klik!
klik!
klik!
klik!
IS
THIS A
TRAP...
...OR
OPENING
NIGHT?


WELCOME, BATMAN-- WELCOME TO MY MONUMENT..
BATMAN
...MY MONUMENT TO YOU, AND ALL YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED!

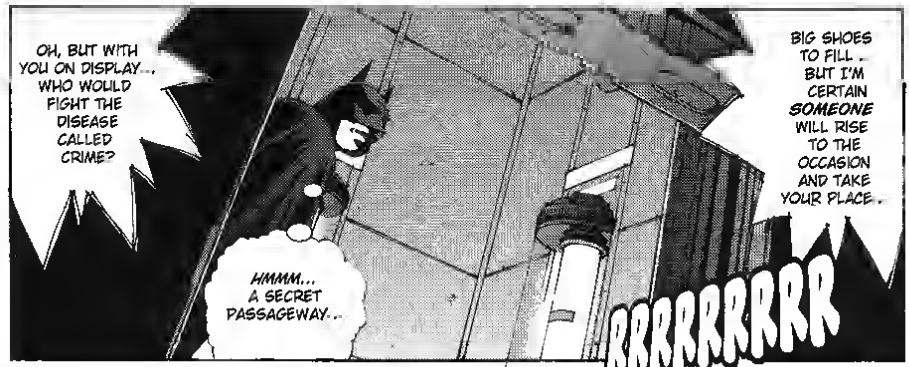

BASK IN YOUR GLORY, BATMAN! I'M YOUR BIGGEST FAN...
..BUT THEN, AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE, YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT!
TRY TO THINK OF IT AS A SORT OF MUSEUM...
...BUT IT'S NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, I'M AFRAID.
YOU SEE, LIKE MOST COLLECTORS, I'M A BIT SELFISH

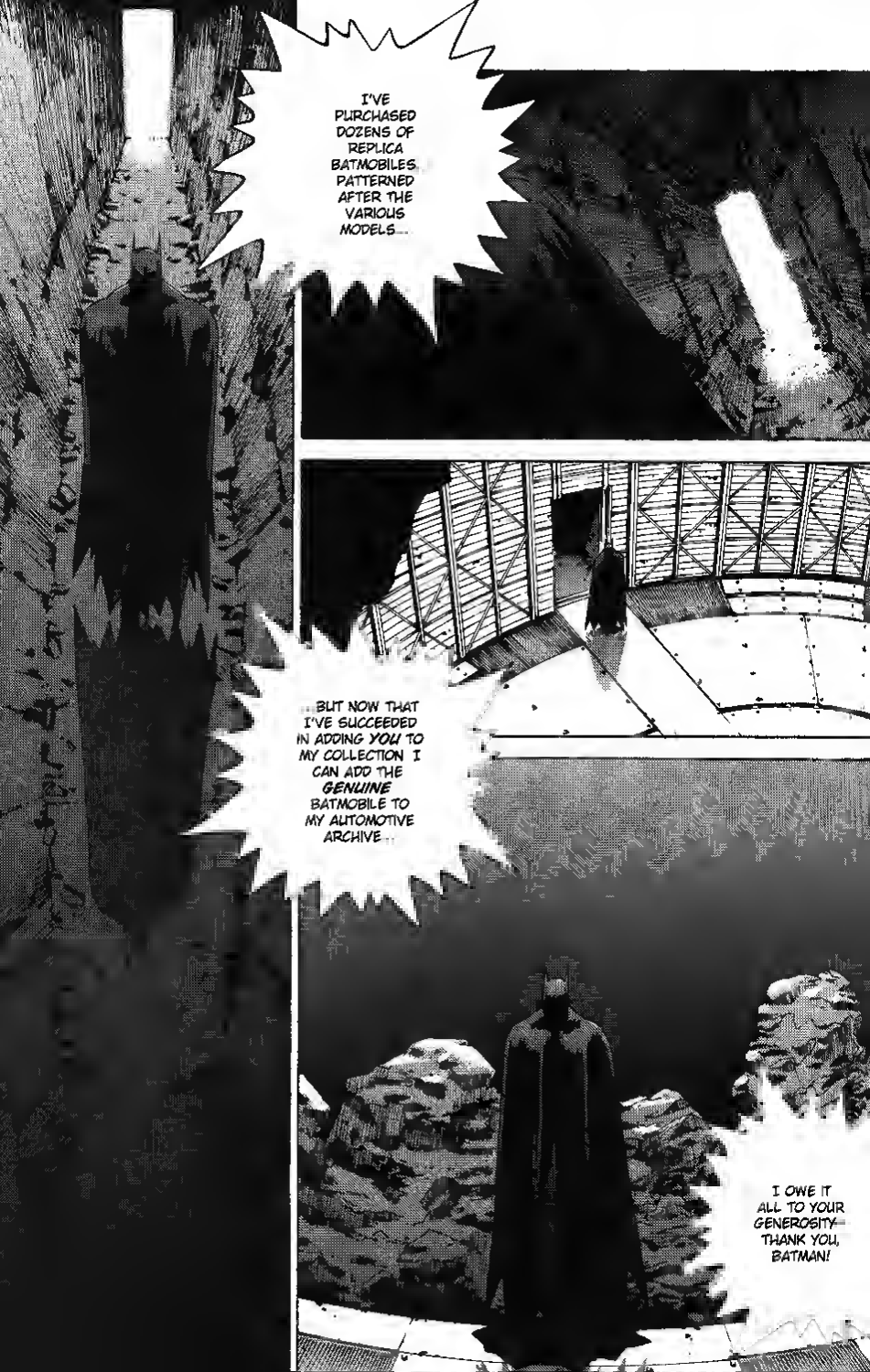
I DOUBT YOUR OWN ARCHIVES COMPARE TO MINE .. SOUVENIRS AND MEMORABILIA OF ALL KINDS!
AMAZING WHAT DEEP POCKETS AND ONLINE AUCTIONS CAN ACCOMPLISH!
THERE ARE MANY BATMAN COLLECTORS OUT THERE, OF COURSE—
...BUT MINE IS THE COLLECTION TO END ALL COLLECTIONS.
SOME OF THESE ARE REPLICAS, OTHERS WERE SALVAGED FROM THE SITES OF YOUR EXPLOITS..
...BATTLES WITH THE JOKER, THE PENGUIN, THE RIDDLER, CATWOMAN, AND MANY, MANY OTHERS...
A *REAL* BATARANG CAN FETCH A PRETTY PRICE. .IT WOULD TAKE A BRUCE WAYNE TO COMPETE WITH ME...
DO YOU SUPPOSE BRUCE WAYNE'S COLLECTION RIVALS MINE?
PERHAPS IN THAT CAVE BENEATH HIS MANSION?
!

OH YES, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BATMAN... BENEATH THE COWL.
BUT I WON'T EXPOSE YOU...
WOULD I, THE BIGGEST BATMAN FAN, TELL THE WORLD THAT THE DARK KNIGHT IS JUST A SPOILED PLAYBOY IN A CAPE?
I WOULDN'T RUIN IT FOR YOU...
JOKE!
...BECAUSE IT'S SOMETHING ONLY I HAVE MANAGED TO COLLECT-- YOUR IDENTITY!
IN FACT, MY COLLECTION LACKS ONLY ONE THING...
...THE ULTIMATE COLLECTIBLE FOR MY BAT MUSEUM...
...THE CAPE, THE COWL, THE COSTUME... THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...


BUT YOU'RE WRONG. THE COSTUME ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH... I WANT WHAT'S INSIDE IT AS WELL...
BATMAN
Bruce Wayne

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BATMAN COLLECTOR MUST ACQUIRE NOTHING LESS--
--THAN BATMAN HIMSELF!!


OH, BUT WITH YOU ON DISPLAY... WHO WOULD FIGHT THE DISEASE CALLED CRIME?
HMMM... A SECRET PASSAGEWAY...
BIG SHOES TO FILL... BUT I'M CERTAIN SOMEONE WILL RISE TO THE OCCASION AND TAKE YOUR PLACE...
RRRRRRRRR


I'VE PURCHASED DOZENS OF REPLICA BATMOBILES PATTERNED AFTER THE VARIOUS MODELS...
...BUT NOW THAT I'VE SUCCEEDED IN ADDING YOU TO MY COLLECTION I CAN ADD THE GENUINE BATMOBILE TO MY AUTOMOTIVE ARCHIVE...
I OWE IT ALL TO YOUR GENEROSITY— THANK YOU, BATMAN!

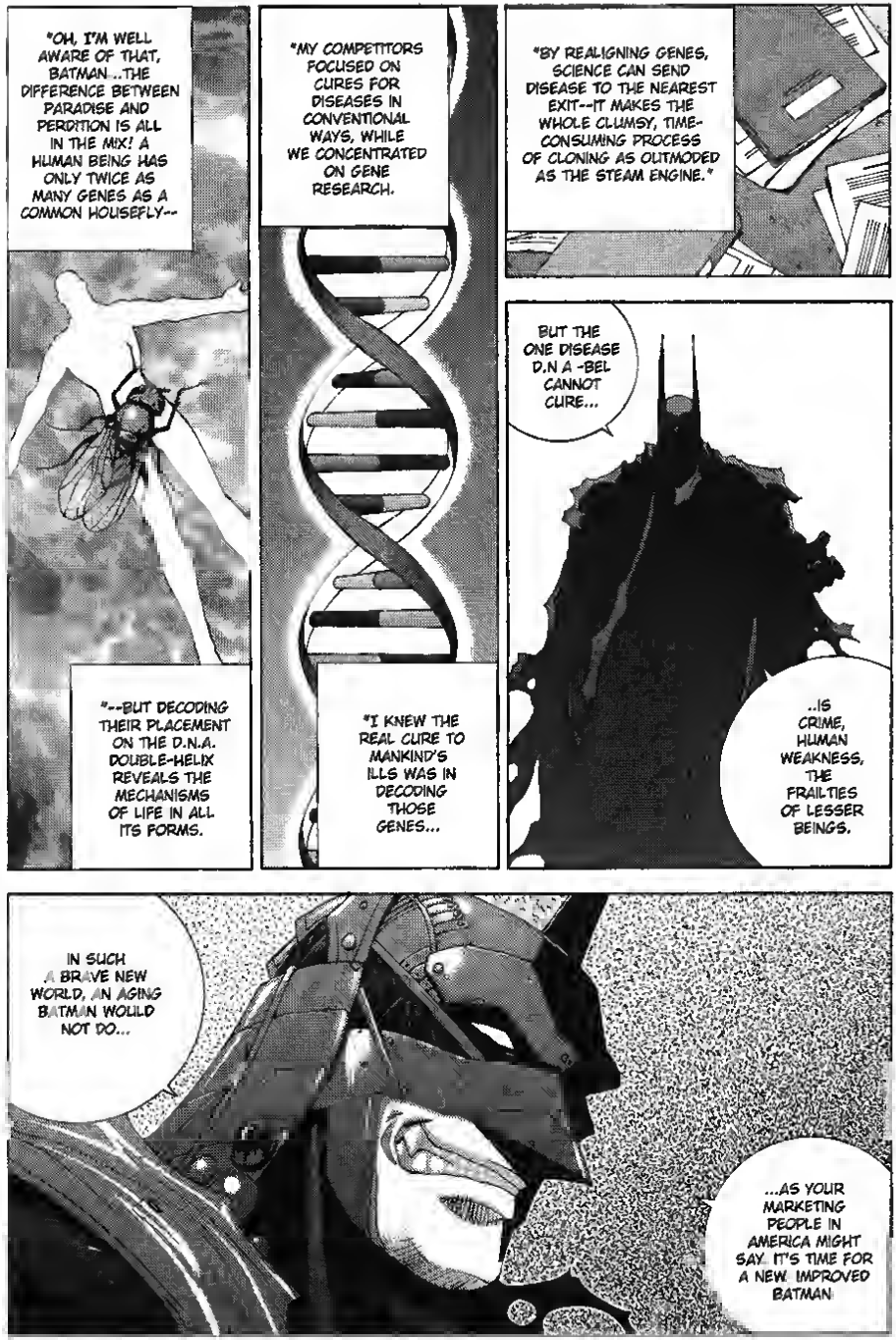
MY CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT... BUT IT'S A BITTERSWEET MOMENT, ACTUALLY...
I'VE FINALLY ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING FEW COLLECTORS EVER MANAGE...
...I'VE COMPLETED MY COLLECTION!!
NOW, SADLY, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO DISPLAY IT...A JOB I WILL DO WITH PRIDE--AND YOU WILL BE THE FIRST TO SEE IT ALL...

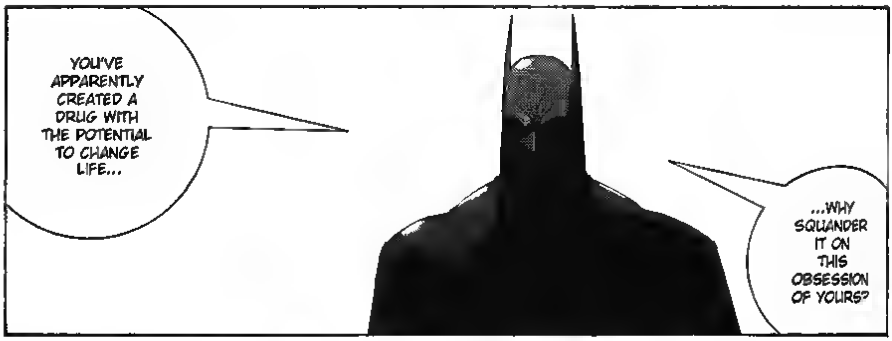
IT'S A PERFECT REPLICA OF THE BATCAVE... IN EVERY DETAIL...
...YET IT'S UNREAL, LIKE A MOVIE SET... WE'RE STILL PLAY-ACTING HERE...
HOW DID HE MANAGE THIS? REPLICATING MY BEST-KEPT SECRET?
...HE MUST HAVE HIDDEN A MICRO-CAM ON YUKIO WHEN I BROUGHT HER TO THE BATCAVE AFTER WE DEALT WITH THE FAKE JOKER..
TV CAMERAS AGAIN... TO HIM MY LIFE IS A FANTASY ADVENTURE... I'VE MET MANY A CRIMINAL MADMAN BUT NONE WITH A DELUSION AS ELABORATE...
...OR AS TWISTED...

IT'S CLEAR HIS FANTASY WON'T END HERE...IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR HIM TO JUST COLLECT THE PIECES OF MY CAREER. IT DOESN'T BECOME REAL UNTIL HE BECOMES--
swoooooshh
--WHAT WAS THAT?
A CAPE?
IT'S MOVING SO FAST-- I CAN HARDLY SEE--
THUNDT
FIRST, THE ANTIDOTE, TOMIOKA!.. THEN I'LL PLAY WHATEVER GAME YOU LIKE.
THERE IS NO ANTIDOTE, BATMAN--NONE IS NEEDED. D.N.A.-BEL IS PERFECTION ITSELF.
I GAVE YUKO ONLY A MINIMAL INJECTION...I SAVED THE FINAL TEST FOR MYSELF! YOU SEE, FOR ALL MY RESEARCH EFFORTS...
...THE ONLY DISEASE I COULD NOT CURE WAS MY OWN...IT'S CALLED PROGERIA. A RAPID SPEEDING UP OF THE AGING PROCESS

THE ONLY CURE WAS DEATH...
...UNTIL MY REBIRTH AS THE NEW BATMAN.

AND NOW WHAT? YOU HAVE YOUR HEALTH. YOUR YOUTH. THAT IS A MIRACLE IN ITSELF. WHAT MORE COULD YOU WANT?
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, BATMAN--THERE'S ROOM FOR ONLY ONE DARK KNIGHT. YOU'RE GROWING OLD. AN ATHLETE HAS ONLY A FEW YEARS TO EXCEL, AND THEN HIS CAREER IS OVER.
AS YOUR BIGGEST FAN, I COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU BECOME A SECOND-RATE HERO. MY WAY, YOU'LL GO OUT AT THE TOP OF YOUR GAME!
THAT'S WHY I STAGED ONE LAST GLORIOUS ADVENTURE, IN WHICH YOU ENCOUNTERED ALL OF YOUR MOST FEARSOME FOES!
SO ALL YOUR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS WERE LITTLE MORE THAN A COVER FOR YOUR *REAL* PURPOSE--
--TO CURE YOUR *OWN* DISEASE--AND THEN, TO TAKE *MY* PLACE.
TOMIOKA... IF YOU'VE PERFECTED A D.N.A.-SHIFTING DRUG...
...YOU MUST USE IT TO BENEFIT MANKIND! THE MEDICAL APPLICATIONS COULD BE MIRACULOUS... BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR ABUSE--ARMIES OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOLDIERS--THE RESULTS COULD BE CATASTROPHIC...

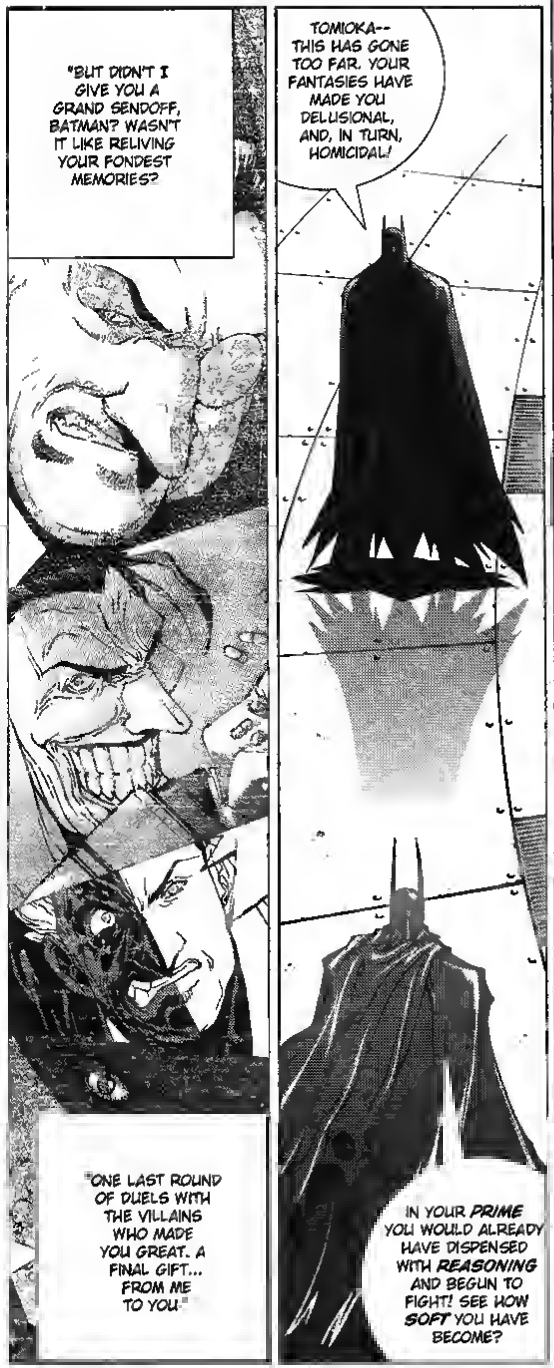

"OH, I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT, BATMAN...THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARADISE AND PERDITION IS ALL IN THE MIX! A HUMAN BEING HAS ONLY TWICE AS MANY GENES AS A COMMON HOUSEFLY--
"--BUT DECODING THEIR PLACEMENT ON THE D.N.A. DOUBLE-HELIX REVEALS THE MECHANISMS OF LIFE IN ALL ITS FORMS.
"MY COMPETITORS FOCUSED ON CURES FOR DISEASES IN CONVENTIONAL WAYS, WHILE WE CONCENTRATED ON GENE RESEARCH.
"I KNEW THE REAL CURE TO MANKIND'S ILLS WAS IN DECODING THOSE GENES...
"BY REALIGNING GENES, SCIENCE CAN SEND DISEASE TO THE NEAREST EXIT--IT MAKES THE WHOLE CLUMSY, TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS OF CLONING AS OUTMODED AS THE STEAM ENGINE."
BUT THE ONE DISEASE D.N A -BEL CANNOT CURE...
..IS CRIME, HUMAN WEAKNESS, THE FRAILTIES OF LESSER BEINGS.
IN SUCH A BRAVE NEW WORLD, AN AGING BATMAN WOULD NOT DO...
...AS YOUR MARKETING PEOPLE IN AMERICA MIGHT SAY. IT'S TIME FOR A NEW. IMPROVED BATMAN.


YOU'VE APPARENTLY CREATED A DRUG WITH THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE LIFE...
...WHY SQUANDER IT ON THIS OBSESSION OF YOURS?

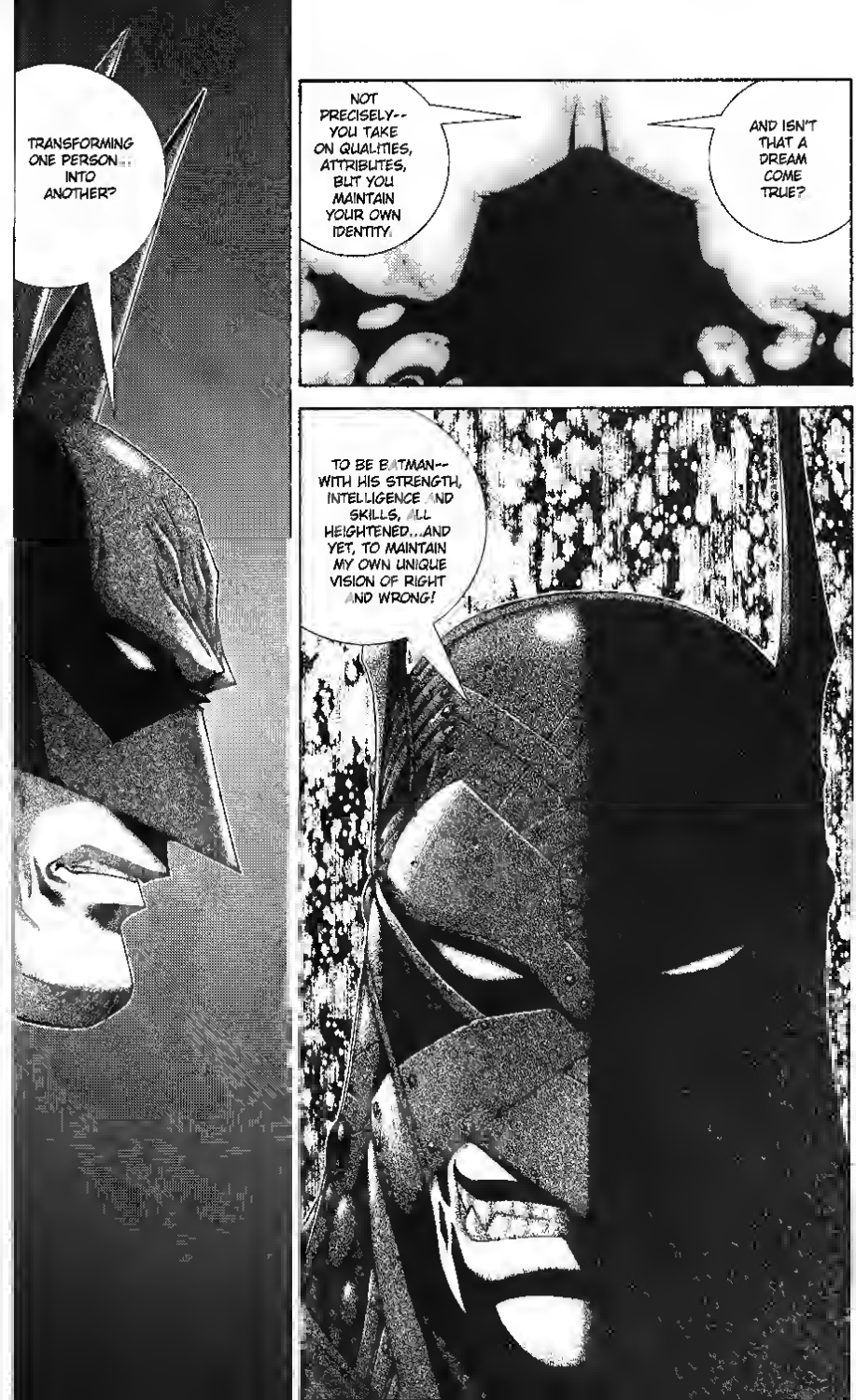
I'VE EARNED THE RIGHT! OTHERS WILL WALK AGAIN, WILL LIVE LONGER BECAUSE OF ME... THE INFIRM WHO'VE DREAMED OF BEING WELL...
...HAVEN'T I MADE THEIR DREAMS COME TRUE?

BUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL DREAM, TOMIOKA--IT'S A NIGHTMARE. SICK... TWISTED...

I SUSPECTED YOU WOULD NOT SEE THINGS MY WAY, BATMAN.
AFTER ALL, NO ONE LIKES HAVING TO LEAVE WHEN THE PARTY'S JUST BEGUN.
YOU'VE SEEN THE RESULTS OF MY PRELIMINARY EXPERIMENTS...HOW MUCH STRONGER MY VILLAINS WERE THAN THE REAL ONES.
I WILL NOT HESITATE TO DISPENSE A HARSH JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO DISPLEASE ME.
I WILL BE THE BATMAN OF THE 21ST CENTURY...
THOSE I DEEM EVIL WILL MEET A FATE MUCH WORSE THAN ANY THEY THEMSELVES COULD ENVISION FOR THEIR VICTIMS.


"BUT DIDN'T I GIVE YOU A GRAND SENDOFF, BATMAN? WASN'T IT LIKE RELIVING YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES?
"ONE LAST ROUND OF DUELS WITH THE VILLAINS WHO MADE YOU GREAT. A FINAL GIFT... FROM ME TO YOU."
TOMIOKA-- THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR. YOUR FANTASIES HAVE MADE YOU DELUSIONAL, AND, IN TURN, HOMICIDAL!
IN YOUR *PRIME* YOU WOULD ALREADY HAVE DISPENSED WITH *REASONING* AND BEGUN TO FIGHT! SEE HOW *SOFT* YOU HAVE BECOME?
YOU'RE NOT WORTHY OF THE CAPE AND COWL, TOMIOKA--NOT A MAN WHO WOULD TURN HIS OWN NIECE INTO A GUINEA PIG FOR THE SAKE OF A TWISTED EXPERIMENT--
I DID YUKO A FAVOR-- SHE IDOLIZED YOU.
AND I ALLOWED HER TO BECOME HER OWN FAVORITE VILLAIN THE CATWOMAN.

YOU SAY YOU'RE MY BIGGEST FAN? THE ULTIMATE BATMAN COLLECTOR?
THEN HOW CAN YOU SO MISUNDERSTAND ME, AND MY MISSION? I'M THE DARKNESS THAT SERVES THE LIGHT... I SEE IN YOU ONLY DARKNESS
IT'S A NEW AGE, WITH NEW NEEDS...
THERE'S NOTHING OF ME IN YOU!
ON THE CONTRARY-- THE DOSAGE OF D.N.A -BEL I GAVE MYSELF WAS LACED WITH YOUR D N A.!
BUT DON'T WORRY... YOU WILL LIVE ON IN ME...
JUST AS YOU REPLICATED THE JOKER, TWO-FACE AND THE REST, BY ACQUIRING THEIR D.N A...!
THAT'S RIGHT, BATMAN. AND THAT'S THE D.N A.-BEL APPLICATION THAT WILL MAKE BILLIONS...


TRANSFORMING ONE PERSON... INTO ANOTHER?
NOT PRECISELY-- YOU TAKE ON QUALITIES, ATTRIBUTES, BUT YOU MAINTAIN YOUR OWN IDENTITY.
AND ISN'T THAT A DREAM COME TRUE?
TO BE BATMAN-- WITH HIS STRENGTH, INTELLIGENCE AND SKILLS, ALL HEIGHTENED...AND YET, TO MAINTAIN MY OWN UNIQUE VISION OF RIGHT AND WRONG!

--THAT MY ABILITIES QUITE SURPASS YOUR OWN!
WHOOP!
ALLOW ME TO DEMON-STRATE--
TUNED
SURPRISED? IMPRESSED PERHAPS?
TO THINK THAT THE INFIRM, FRAGILE TOMIOKA OF A FEW DAYS AGO COULD BECOME THE NEW BATMAN...
YOU'RE NOT BATMAN YET, OLD MAN...

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE THE OLD MAN, BRUCE...
...MAY I CALL YOU 'BRUCE'?
SINCE YOU'RE NO LONGER BATMAN, I MEAN.
A FANCY LEAP, A LITTLE TALK... NO I'M NOT IMPRESSED.
WELL IT'S HIGH TIME YOU WERE! AND TIME FOR YOU TO DIE AND MAKE WAY!
WOOH!

HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN .. CAREFUL, BATMAN!
wip! wip! wip! wip!
TRY NOT TO LAND ON ANY OF MY COLLECTIBLES! THEY'RE ONE-OF-A-KIND ITEMS... JUST LIKE YOU!
SKOOOP!
WELL...YOU STILL HAVE ADMIRABLE REFLEXES, ANYWAY...
..YOU SEE, I STILL VALUE YOU--AS A MUSEUM ARTIFACT, IF NOT A CRIME FIGHTER.

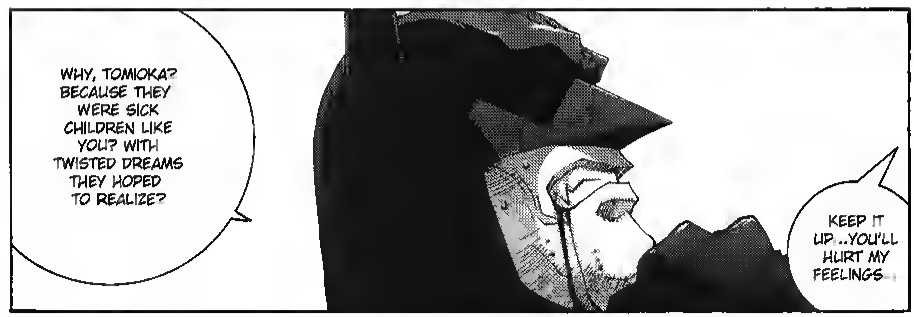
THWIPP!
TOMIOKA-- THERE'S NO NEED FOR THIS LET'S TALK LIKE--
YOU INSIST ON PROVING MY POINT-- YOU *WERE* A MAN OF ACTION, ONCE... NOW, IT'S ALL TALK!
WHOSH!
JUST AS MY TWO-FACE, JOKER, CATWOMAN AND THE REST WERE SUPERIOR TO THE ORIGINALS, SO I AM ..
HOM
MMP!!
TOMIOKA, YOUR COPIES MAY HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY STRONGER.. BUT MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY, THEY WERE PARODIES OF THEMSELVES

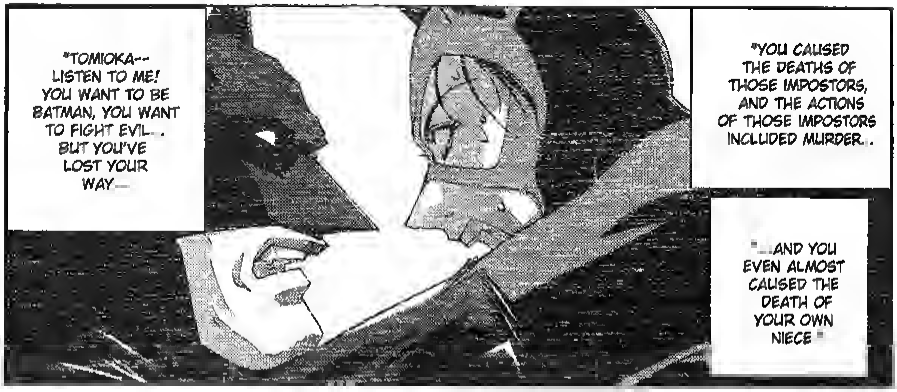
...JUST AS YOU ARE A PARODY OF ME! THE DRUGS HAVE HAD AN UNANTICIPATED SIDE EFFECT! I IMPLORE THE SCIENTIST WITHIN YOU TO HEAR ME!
NO, BATMAN... THIS IS NO SIDE EFFECT. IT'S THE DESIRED INTENDED EFFECT.

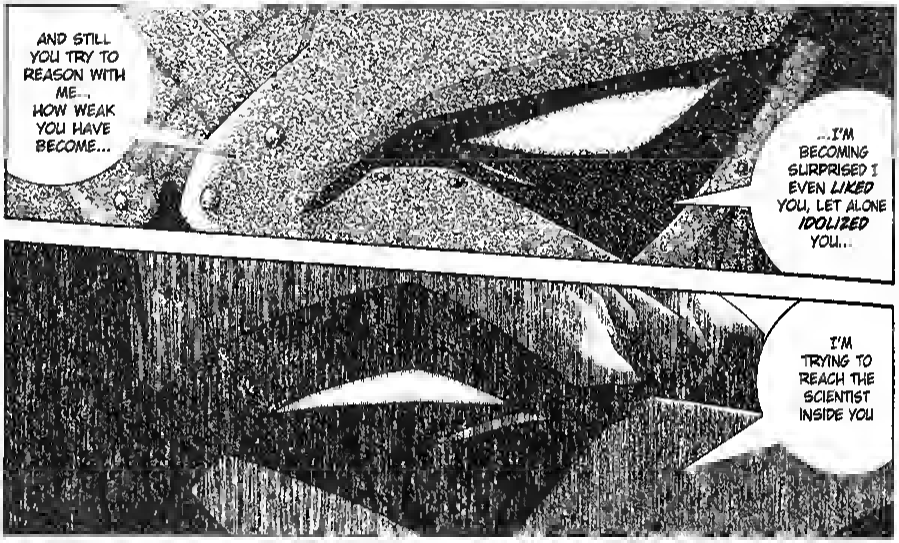
"AND IT ALL WORKED PRECISELY THE WAY I ORCHESTRATED IT. IT TOOK A MIND-ALTERING DRUG COMBINED WITH D.N.A.-BEL TO CONTROL MY NIECE AS CATWOMAN..
"...WHILE THE OTHERS--THE JOKER, PENGUIN, RIDDLER--ACTED OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL."

BECAUSE THEY WERE DELUDED "FANS" LIKE YOU, TOMIOKA?
DON'T INSULT YOUR GREATEST ADMIRER!
WRNCH!

YOU... HAVE A STRANGE WAY OF EXPRESSING YOUR ADMIRATION ..
ARE YOU SO ISOLATED IN YOUR IVORY TOWER, BRUCE WAYNE, THAT YOU DON'T SEE THE WORLD AROUND YOU? YOUR VILLAINS HAVE ADMIRERS TOO...
... JOKER WEB SITES, RIDDLER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES...
CONTACTING, CONNECTING WITH, AND MANIPULATING THOSE FOOLS WAS CHILD'S PLAY...


WHY, TOMIOKA? BECAUSE THEY WERE SICK CHILDREN LIKE YOU? WITH TWISTED DREAMS THEY HOPED TO REALIZE?
KEEP IT UP...YOU'LL HURT MY FEELINGS...

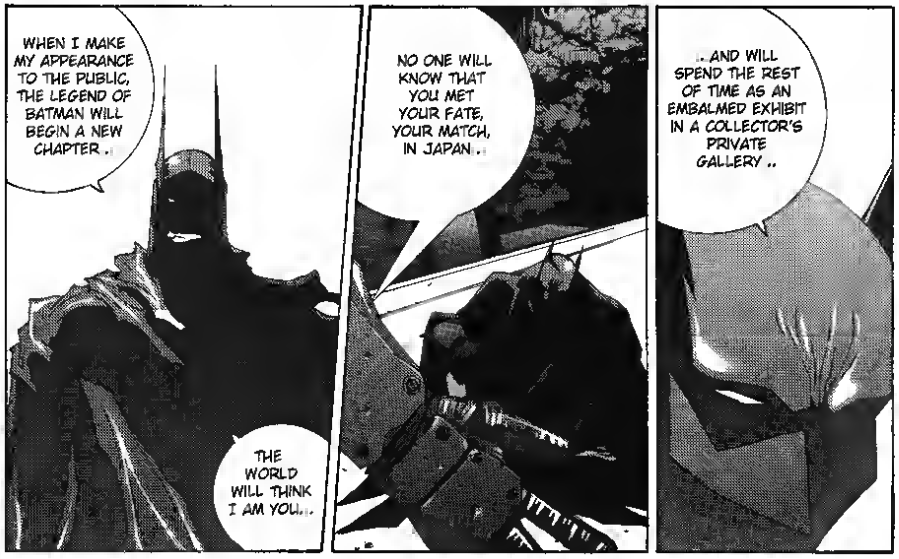

"TOMIOKA--
LISTEN TO ME!
YOU WANT TO BE
BATMAN, YOU WANT
TO FIGHT EVIL...
BUT YOU'VE
LOST YOUR
WAY--
"YOU CAUSED
THE DEATHS OF
THOSE IMPOSTORS,
AND THE ACTIONS
OF THOSE IMPOSTORS
INCLUDED MURDER..
"...AND YOU
EVEN ALMOST
CAUSED THE
DEATH OF
YOUR OWN
NIECE."


AND STILL
YOU TRY TO
REASON WITH
ME...
HOW WEAK
YOU HAVE
BECOME...
...I'M
BECOMING
SURPRISED I
EVEN *LIKED*
YOU, LET ALONE
IDOLIZED
YOU...
I'M
TRYING TO
REACH THE
SCIENTIST
INSIDE YOU

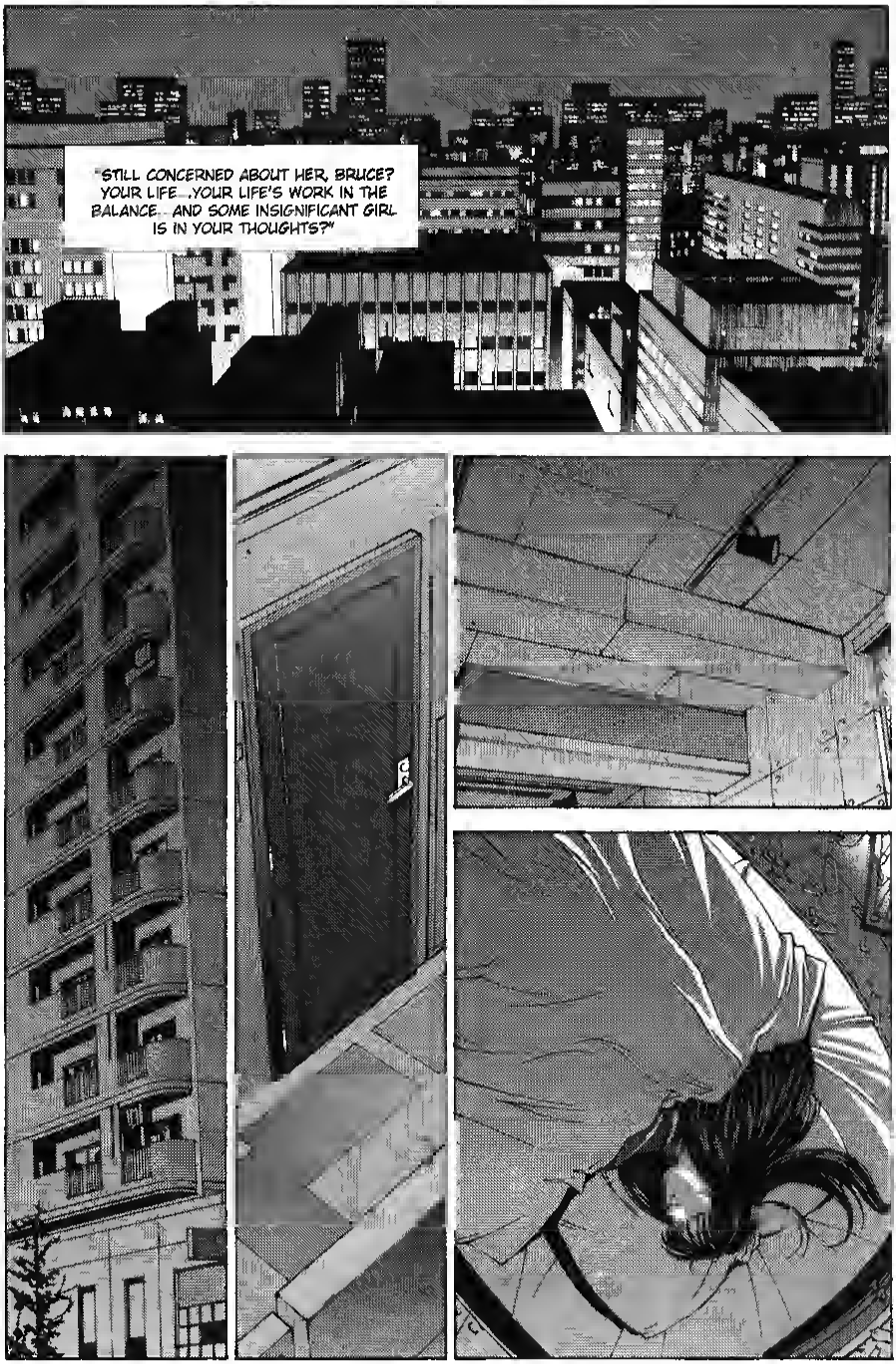
WELL,
YOU'VE
FAILED!
WHOOOSH!

KRUNCH
WHUMP!!
I WAS RIGHT... THIS "BATCAVE" IS JUST A MOVIE-SET MOCKUP... THE PROPS CUSHIONED MY FALL!
YOU INSIST ON DEFILING MY MUSEUM!
WHAT AN UNRULY EXHIBIT YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO BE!
I'M A RATHER STERN CURATOR, YOU'LL FIND...
WHUUMP!
skishhhh

I IMAGINE THIS IS THE MOMENT WHERE YOU FINALLY UNDERSTAND THAT MY STRENGTH IS NOW GREATER THAN YOURS EVER WAS


WHEN I MAKE MY APPEARANCE TO THE PUBLIC, THE LEGEND OF BATMAN WILL BEGIN A NEW CHAPTER..
THE WORLD WILL THINK I AM YOU...
NO ONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU MET YOUR FATE, YOUR MATCH, IN JAPAN...
..AND WILL SPEND THE REST OF TIME AS AN EMBALMED EXHIBIT IN A COLLECTOR'S PRIVATE GALLERY ..

NO ONE NEEDS TO KNOW HOW PATHETIC YOUR LAST MOMENTS WERE.. HOW YOU CHOSE TO TALK, NOT FIGHT...
GET UP!
HAVE SOME PRIDE! SOME SHRED OF DIGNITY! GO DOWN FIGHTING! LIKE A HERO--
OR WOULD YOU RATHER LIE STILL AND LET ME PUT YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY?
..AND WHAT OF YUKO?


"STILL CONCERNED ABOUT HER, BRUCE? YOUR LIFE...YOUR LIFE'S WORK IN THE BALANCE... AND SOME INSIGNIFICANT GIRL IS IN YOUR THOUGHTS?"

BATMAN..
...MAN...
...BRUCE...
BAT...

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT HER...HER DOSAGE WAS MINUSCULE COMPARED TO MINE...
THAT...AND THE WEEKLY INJECTIONS I WILL BE TAKING FROM NOW ON...
...WILL EFFECT AN ONGOING, EVENTUALLY PERMANENT CHANGE...
...WITHIN A YEAR, NO MORE INJECTIONS... JUST PERFECTION.
DRIP!
DRIP!
DRIP!

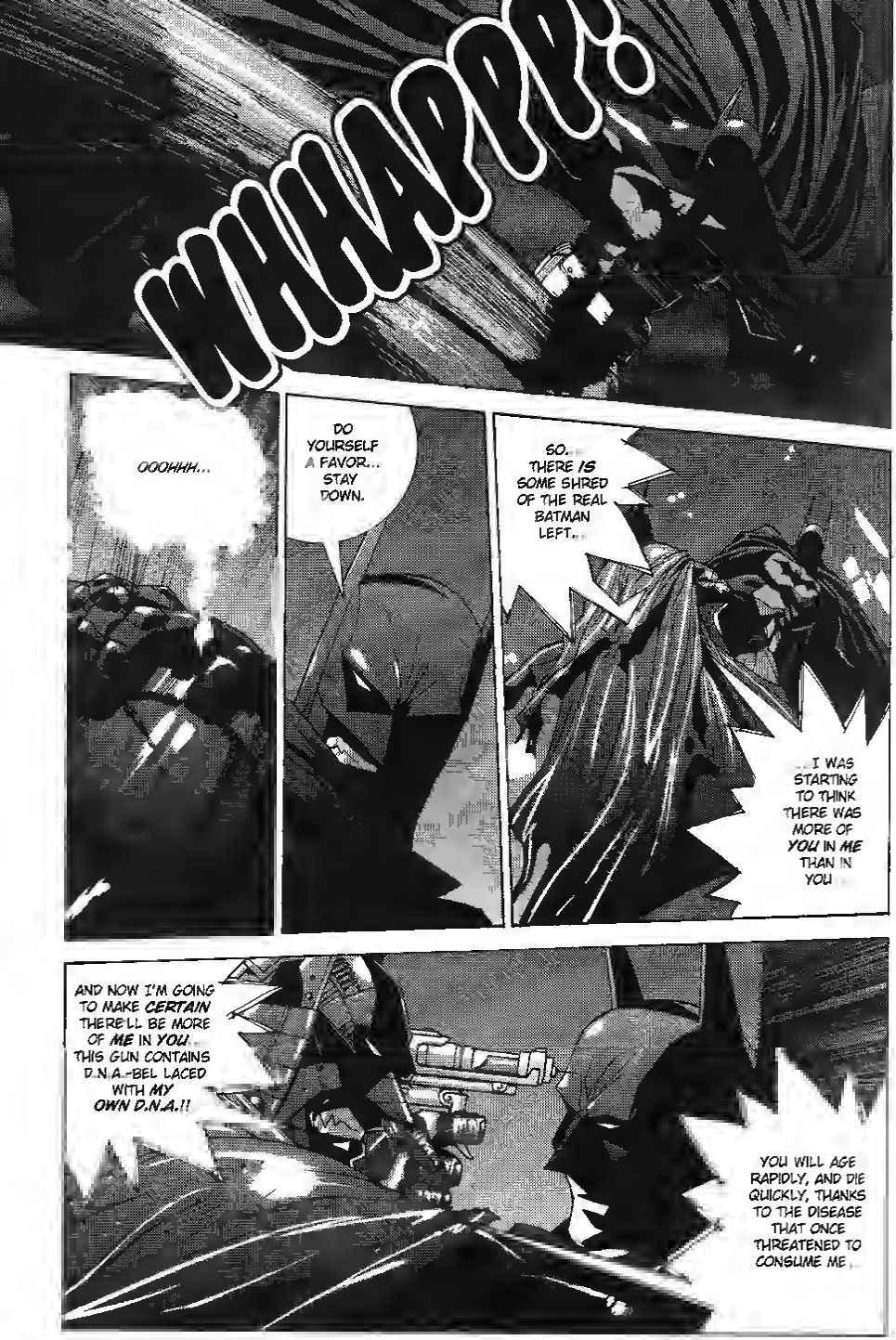
YOU'RE DRIPPING YOUR PRECIOUS D.N A , BRUCE... BUT I'LL COLLECT PLENTY OF IT, BEFORE THE DAY IS DONE...
OH. WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT YOU HAVE TURNED OUT TO BE TO ME!

I WOULD BE A DISAPPOINTMENT TO MYSELF. IF I EVER INSPIRED ANYONE LIKE YOU TO BECOME THIS KIND OF MONSTER...
YOU'VE SUCCUMBED TO MANKIND'S WORST DISEASE... YOU'RE HITLER... YOU'RE POL POT... YOU'RE BIN LADEN... YOU'RE EVIL...
INSULTS. TALK...
UGGGHH...
YOU WERE ONCE A MAN OF ACTION!
KRAAAAAA

YOU SICKEN ME! TIME TO MAKE A LAB SPECIMEN OUT OF YOU!
WHONK!!
WHAP!
KRRRSS

WHUMP
I FELT THAT...
WHERE HAVE I LANDED...?
...HIS PRIVATE LAB!
THIS IS WHERE I WAS BORN, BATMAN... AND WHERE YOU WILL DIE.

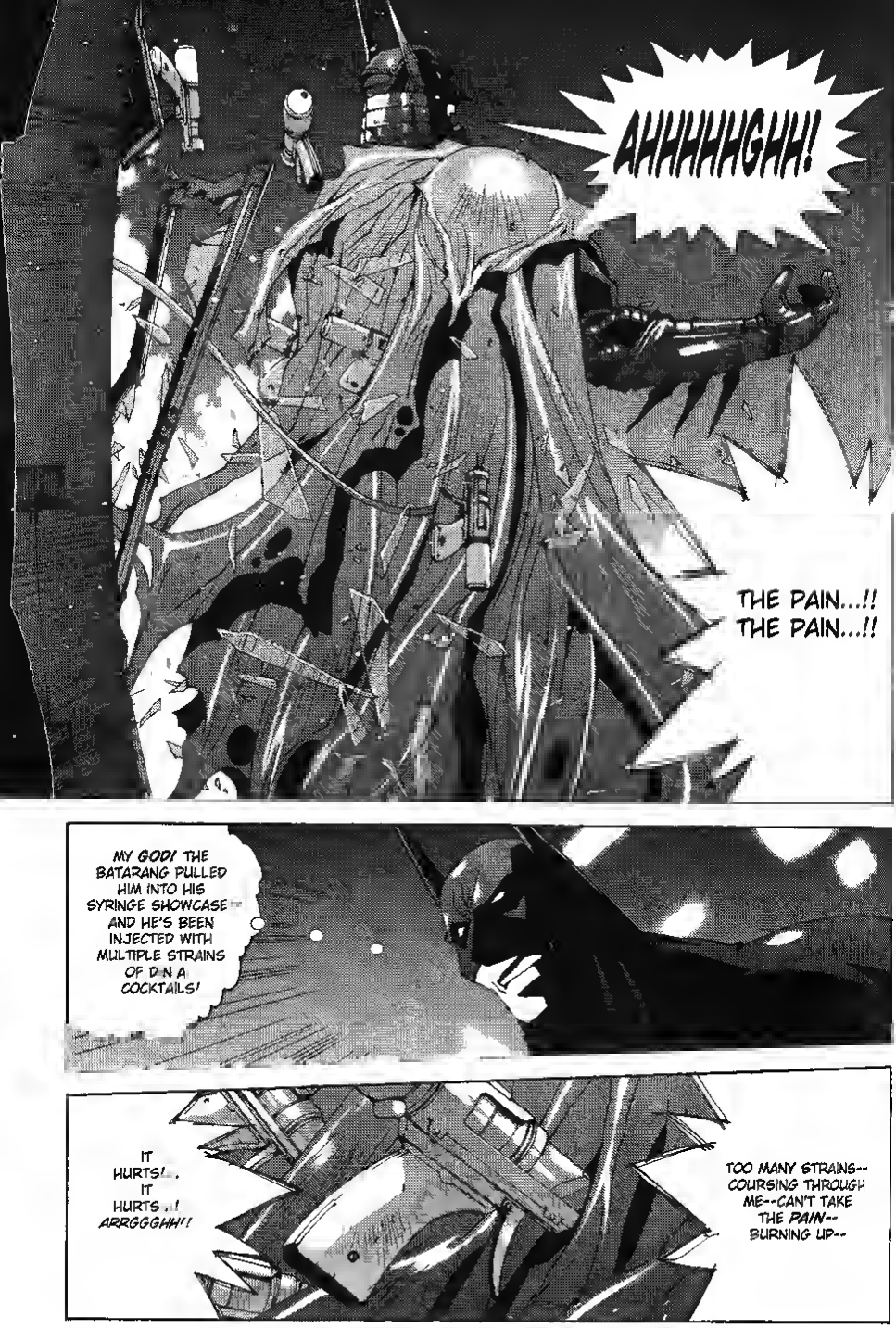
MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS WERE CREATED HERE--NOT BY MY TEAM, BUT BY ME ALONE...
YOUR BAT COLLECTION EXTENDS TO THE LAB, I SEE...
YES--THOSE NEEDLE GUNS CONTAIN SPECIMENS OF THE SAME DRUGS USED BY MY AGENTS TO RECREATE YOUR ROGUES GALLERY IN GOTHAM CITY...
THOSE DRUGS ALLOWED ME TO STAGE THE WONDERFULLY THEATRICAL EXPERIMENT IN WHICH YOU BESTED YOUR GREATEST FOES...BUT NOW, YOU WILL FALL BEFORE ME.
YOU KNOW, AFTER YOUR LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE TODAY, I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE MY DOUBTS...
I DON'T THINK SO.
I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO BE BATMAN, ANYMORE. I WONDER IF I'M NOT BETTER SERVED ACQUIRING SUPERMAN'S D.N.A...
WHACK!


KHAAPP!
OOOHHH...
DO YOURSELF A FAVOR... STAY DOWN.
SO... THERE *IS* SOME SHRED OF THE REAL BATMAN LEFT...
...I WAS STARTING TO THINK THERE WAS MORE OF *YOU* IN *ME* THAN IN YOU...
AND NOW I'M GOING TO MAKE *CERTAIN* THERE'LL BE MORE OF *ME* IN *YOU*... THIS GUN CONTAINS D.N.A.-BEL LACED WITH *MY OWN D.N.A.!!*
YOU WILL AGE RAPIDLY, AND DIE QUICKLY, THANKS TO THE DISEASE THAT ONCE THREATENED TO CONSUME ME...

BUT IT ISN'T ALL BAD, BATMAN... AT LEAST YOU'LL DIE KNOWING YOUR WORK WILL CONTINUE--
--AS I TAKE IT TO AN EVEN GREATER LEVEL!
DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY
A MAN ISN'T JUST HIS D.N.A.... HE'S HIS INTELLECT, HIS EXPERIENCES, HIS SOUL...
I'VE EXTRACTED YOUR ESSENCE! I AM THE BEST OF YOU COMBINED WITH THE BEST OF ME!
YOU'RE THE WORST CORRUPTION OF SCIENCE THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN...
"YOU'RE NOT BATMAN, TOMIOKA! YOU'RE NOT THE THINGS THAT I EXPERIENCED, THE EVENTS THAT SHAPED ME...
"...YOU'RE A HIDEOUS PARODY OF BOTH OF US, A GROTESQUE AMALGAM OF SCIENCE AND NATURE..."

I IDOLIZED YOU, BATMAN! I WAS WEAK, RAVAGED BY DISEASE... AND YOU GAVE ME HOPE! AND NOW YOU MOCK ME...
YOU MOCK YOURSELF. YOU WERE BRILLIANT... A GREAT MAN... AND YOU'VE THROWN IT ALL AWAY.
YOU'RE WRONG, BRUCE WAYNE, I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN EVERYTHING I WANTED-- FOR NOW, I AM BATMAN!
HE'S RAVING... AND SECONDS AWAY FROM PLUMPING THE CONTENTS OF THAT SYRINGE INTO MY BRAIN...
RETRACTABLE BATARANG IS MY ONLY CHANCE TO PUT SOME DISTANCE...
...BETWEEN ME AND THAT NEEDLE.
SAYONARA, BATMA--
BOOOMSH
KRRSHH
SHTTR
EH?

NOW IF I CAN JUST JAM THE REWIND UNIT INTO *HIS* UTILITY BELT AND--
--RETRACT--
WHAT--!
OOOFFFF!
RRRRRRR
WWWRRRRRRR
AAARRRRHH!!
CRSHH
KKK
KRKK
D*MN...


AHHHHHGHH!
THE PAIN...!!
THE PAIN...!!
MY GOD! THE BATARANG PULLED HIM INTO HIS SYRINGE SHOWCASE-- AND HE'S BEEN INJECTED WITH MULTIPLE STRAINS OF D:N A COCKTAILS!
IT HURTS!.. IT HURTS..! ARRGGGHH!!
TOO MANY STRAINS-- COURSING THROUGH ME--CAN'T TAKE THE PAIN-- BURNING UP--

HEELLLPP ME! SAAAVE ME!
SSSSZZZZZZLLLLLL
MERCY...
TOMIOKA-- WHAT CAN I DO--
KRRSSSHH!!!
NOOOO...!!
THE PAIN .. NOOOO!!!!
SO MUCH PAIN...

URRGGHH...
URNNN
WHERE'S THE ANTIDOTE?
SW
WAKK
YOU... DON'T... UNDERSTAND ...!!
THERE ...
...IS...
...NO...
...ANTIDOTE!
...D.N.A. -BEL IS A CURE!
...BAT...
...MAN?

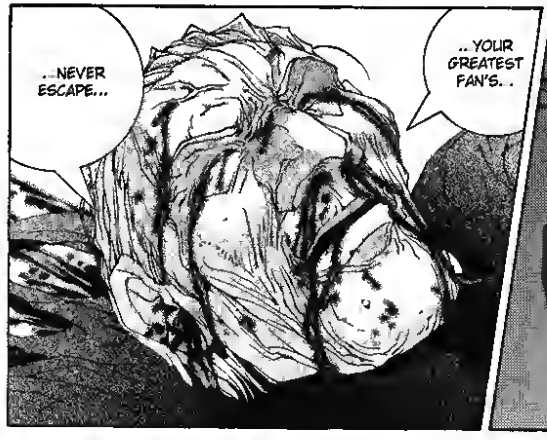
FORGIVE ME...
...I SHOULD NEVER .HAVE... UNDER. ESTIMATED.. YOU.. MY HERO... MY IDEAL...
WHOMP!
WHERE'S THE BATMOBILE?
I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.
...YOUR ...GREAT... VEHICLE...
...IS... NEARBY...
ALL RIGHT... LET'S GET YOU UP...
NO!... ONE LAST CHALLENGE...
TOMIOKA! WHAT CAN I DO?

NO, TOMIOKA... NO MORE GAMES. THERE ISN'T ANY TIME...
HA HA HA HA HA...

...I WAS RIGHT. YOU ARE WEAK
...YOU'LL NEVER... NEVER..

NEVER WHAT?.. LET ME GET THAT MASK OFF...

Shrippppp
NEVER WHAT, TOMIOKA?


...NEVER ESCAPE...
.. YOUR GREATEST FAN'S..

KLK
...FINAL ...DEATH... TRAP...

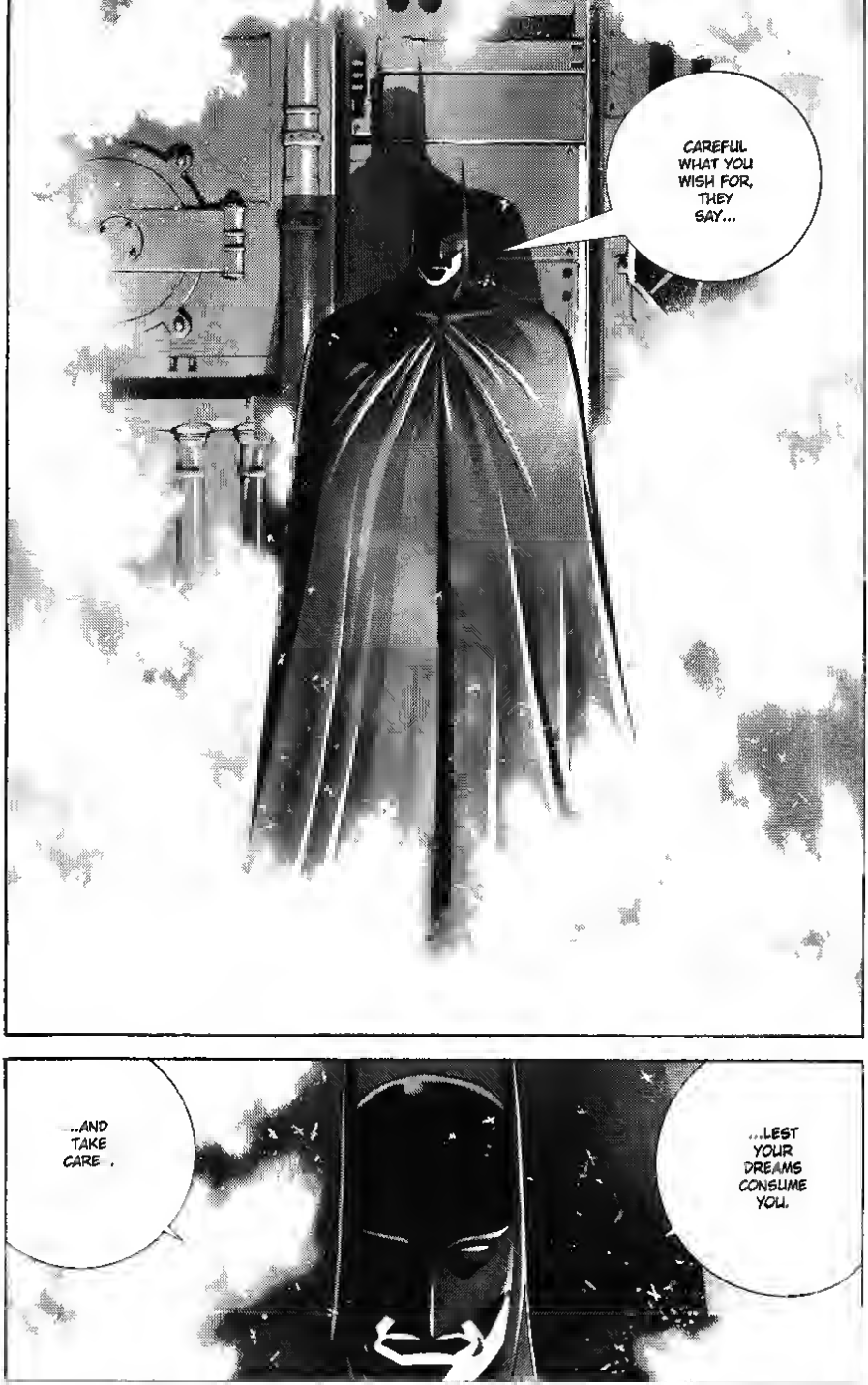
KUH-

WOOM!!!

BA-BOOOM

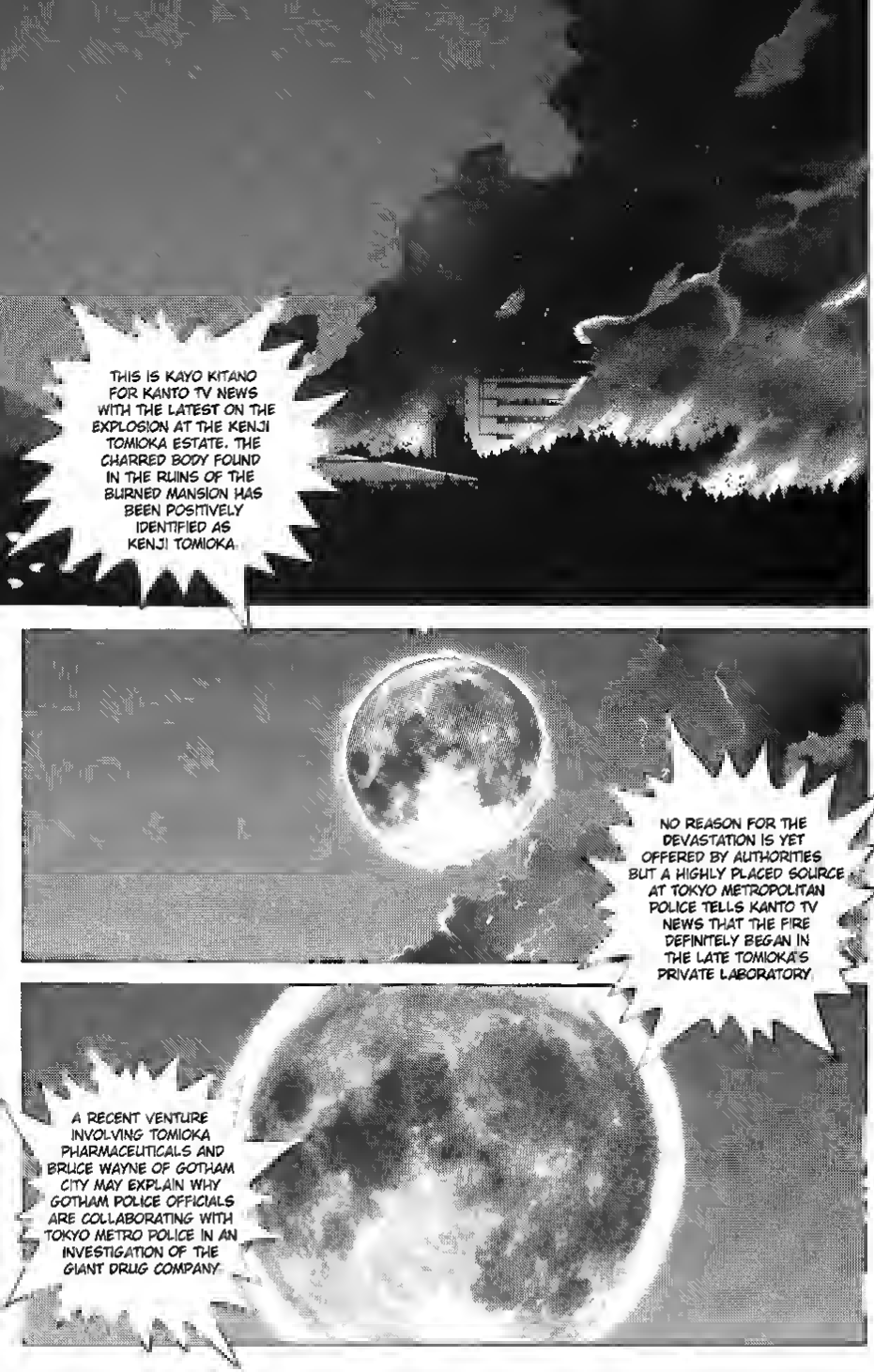
FFSSSIZLLLE!!!

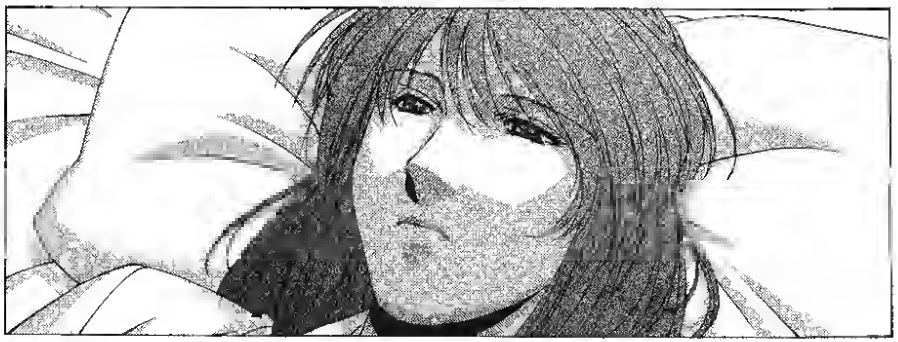
KRRAKKRURRRACKL!
...IF I... CAN'T...
...HAVE... MY .. COLLECTION... LET THE FLAMES HAVE IT!
...AND I WILL NEVER... KNOW...
...IF MY GREAT HERO...
...DIED WITH... ME...
...OR MADE .. ANOTHER... GREAT... ESCAPE!


CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR, THEY SAY...
...AND TAKE CARE.
...LEST YOUR DREAMS CONSUME YOU.

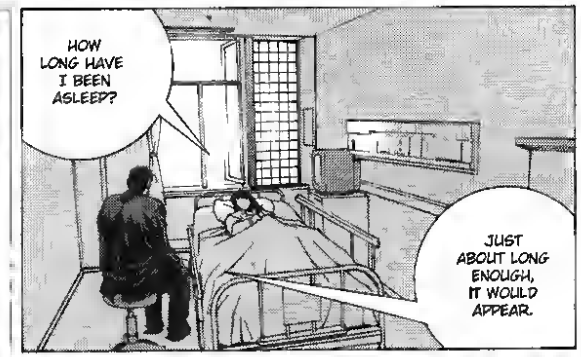
Beep
Beep
IT'S IN RANGE OF THE REMOTE. GOOD.
COME TO PAPA...
WHAM!
SCREECH

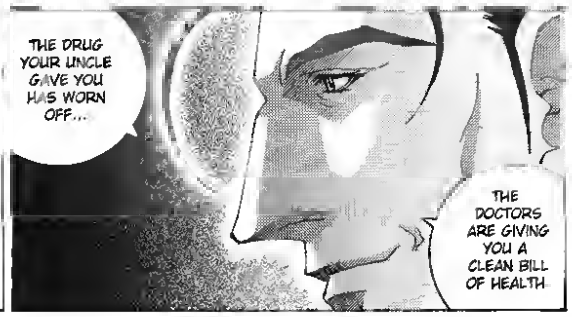
THE AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE ARRIVING SHORTLY...
VRMMM
WHAT THEY FIND HERE WILL BE TRAGIC.
THE REMAINS OF A MADMAN'S OBSESSION... THE ACCESSORIES OF HIS DELUSION...
BUT FOR ALL THE DISCOVERIES THEY'LL MAKE PORING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE...
VRMMM
VRMMM
MY PART IN THIS DRAMA WILL REMAIN IN THE DARKNESS.
...WHICH, IN THE END, IS WHERE BATMAN BELONGS...


THIS IS KAYO KITANO FOR KANTO TV NEWS WITH THE LATEST ON THE EXPLOSION AT THE KENJI TOMIOKA ESTATE. THE CHARRED BODY FOUND IN THE RUINS OF THE BURNED MANSION HAS BEEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS KENJI TOMIOKA.
NO REASON FOR THE DEVASTATION IS YET OFFERED BY AUTHORITIES BUT A HIGHLY PLACED SOURCE AT TOKYO METROPOLITAN POLICE TELLS KANTO TV NEWS THAT THE FIRE DEFINITELY BEGAN IN THE LATE TOMIOKA'S PRIVATE LABORATORY.
A RECENT VENTURE INVOLVING TOMIOKA PHARMACEUTICALS AND BRUCE WAYNE OF GOTHAM CITY MAY EXPLAIN WHY GOTHAM POLICE OFFICIALS ARE COLLABORATING WITH TOKYO METRO POLICE IN AN INVESTIGATION OF THE GIANT DRUG COMPANY.



MORNING, SLEEPY-HEAD...
BRUCE...


HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP?
JUST ABOUT LONG ENOUGH, IT WOULD APPEAR.

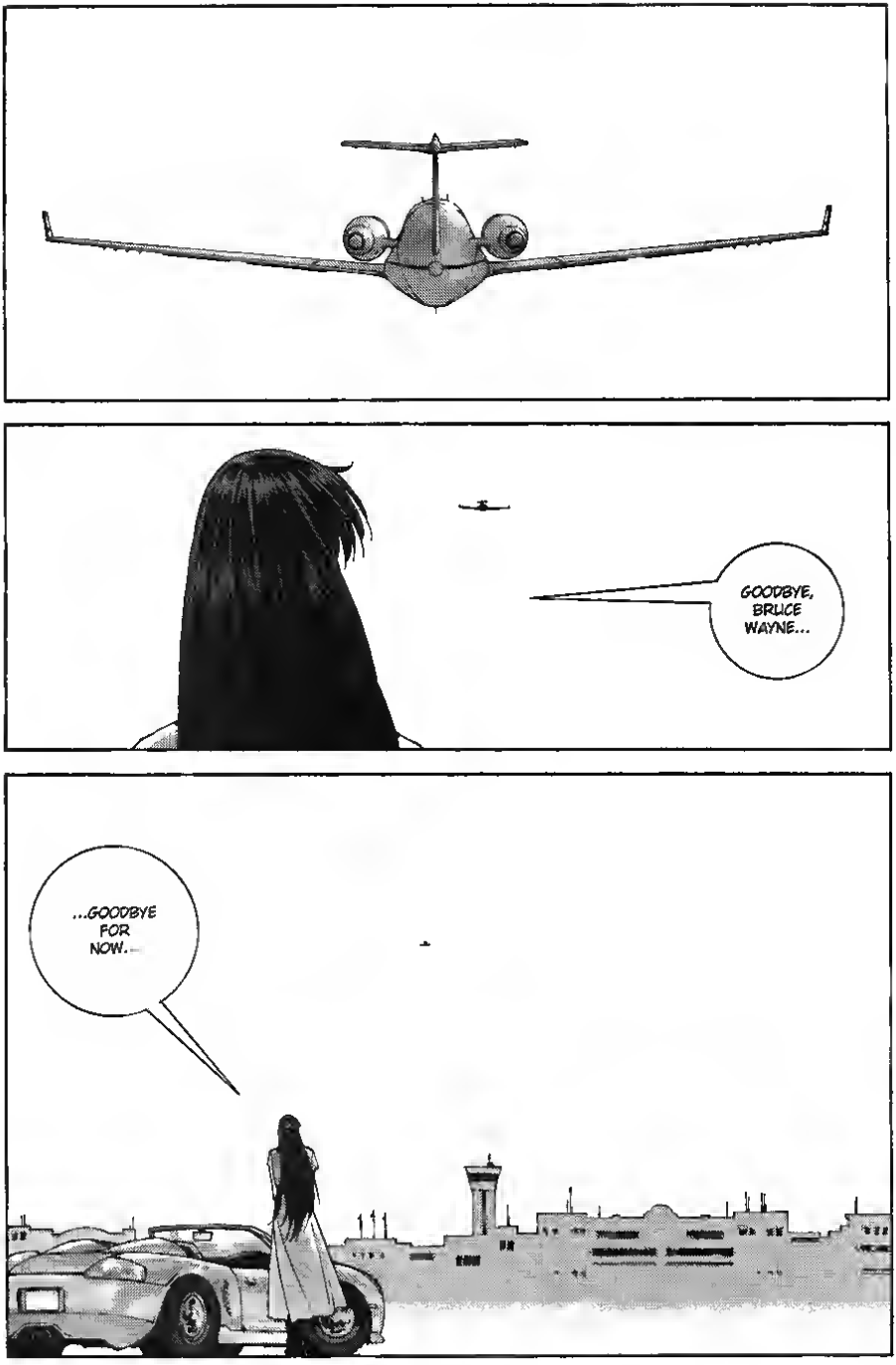

THE DRUG YOUR UNCLE GAVE YOU HAS WORN OFF...
THE DOCTORS ARE GIVING YOU A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH

AND... MY UNCLE?
THERE'S TIME FOR THAT LATER.
NO.. TELL ME NOW, BRUCE.
HE WAS A BRILLIANT BUT MISGUIDED MAN, YUKO.
YUKO .. HE'S DEAD. HE DRUGGED YOU, AND HE TRIED TO KILL BATMAN.
I SHOULD BE SAD... OR SURPRISED...
...BUT SOMEHOW I KNEW.
I MIGHT HAVE KILLED BATMAN MYSELF...
UNCLE KENJI USED ME, MANIPULATED ME--HAVE I DONE ANYTHING WRONG? WILL I BE CHARGED?

OF COURSE NOT, YUKO. YOU WERE A VICTIM IN THIS... AN INNOCENT. IT'S A NEW DAY
"WELL, THEN, BRUCE, YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED... ALL OF IT. I'M A REPORTER AND I NEED TO KNOW."

BRUCE, HOW CAN I EVER REPAY YOU ..TALKING BATMAN INTO GIVING ME AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW.
HE FELT IT WAS THE LEAST HE COULD DO, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES . TO KICK-START YOUR CAREER .
AND IT WORKED-- NOW I HAVE THE ANCHOR JOB ON THE NIGHTLY NEWS, AND I HAVE BOTH OF YOU TO THANK ..
VROOOOOMMMM
...WHEN I COULD HAVE ENDED UP DISGRACED, BECAUSE OF MY UNCLE'S ACTIONS.
FUNNY THING, MY LITTLE ADVENTURE AS THE CATWOMAN .. IT'S LIKE A DREAM LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.
GOOD.
BUT THAT NIGHT, WHEN I WAS RECOVERING, WHEN BATMAN LEFT ME SO HE COULD CONFRONT MY UNCLE, I HAD ANOTHER DREAM..

WHAT KIND OF DREAM, YUKO?
I DREAMED YOU AND BATMAN WERE... THE SAME.
I KNOW THAT'S A PRETTY SILLY DREAM... CHILDISH, EVEN, DON'T YOU THINK?
ACTUALLY, I'M SORT OF *FLATTERED*... BUT IT *IS* A STRETCH...
HE SAVED MY LIFE, BRUCE. AND I HARDLY MANAGED TO THANK HIM...
I HAD SOMETHING I WANTED TO GIVE HIM--BUT I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO YOU INSTEAD.
WHAT'S THAT, YUKO?


GOODBYE, BRUCE WAYNE...
...GOODBYE FOR NOW...

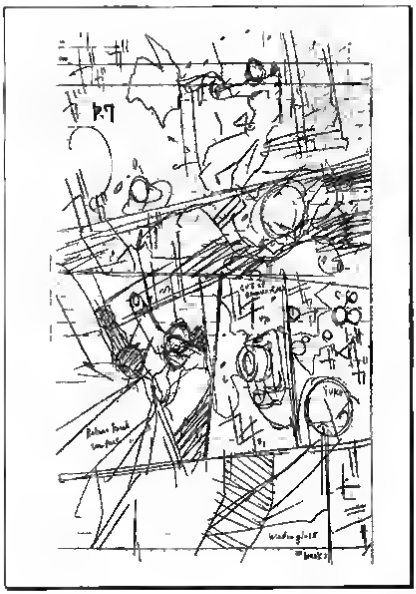
GOTHAM CITY

YOUR DINNER, SIR.
WATCHING THE SATELLITE FEED AGAIN, SIR?
THANK YOU, ALFRED.
YES, ALFRED... I LIKE TO KEEP UP ON INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.
WHAT A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN...
DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'LL EVER GET BACK TO TOKYO, SIR, WHAT WITH YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE?
LIVE
GNN
GNN YUKO YAGI
I DON'T KNOW, ALFRED... I CAN DREAM, CAN'T I?

THE END

GALLERY

Over a year in the making, BATMAN CHILD OF DREAMS was the lead feature in the premiere issue of Kodansha Publisher's *Magazine Z*, a 700+ page monthly manga dedicated to presenting stories featuring both all-new characters as well as new stories featuring time-honored icons in the world of manga. A truly international cooperative venture, the successful execution of the story was coordinated by editors on both sides of the planet



Mr. Asamiya's original thumbnail sketches for the story. Note the English notes, added by Kodansha editors to help explain the storytelling. A literal translation of Mr. Asamiya's script was also provided for approval.

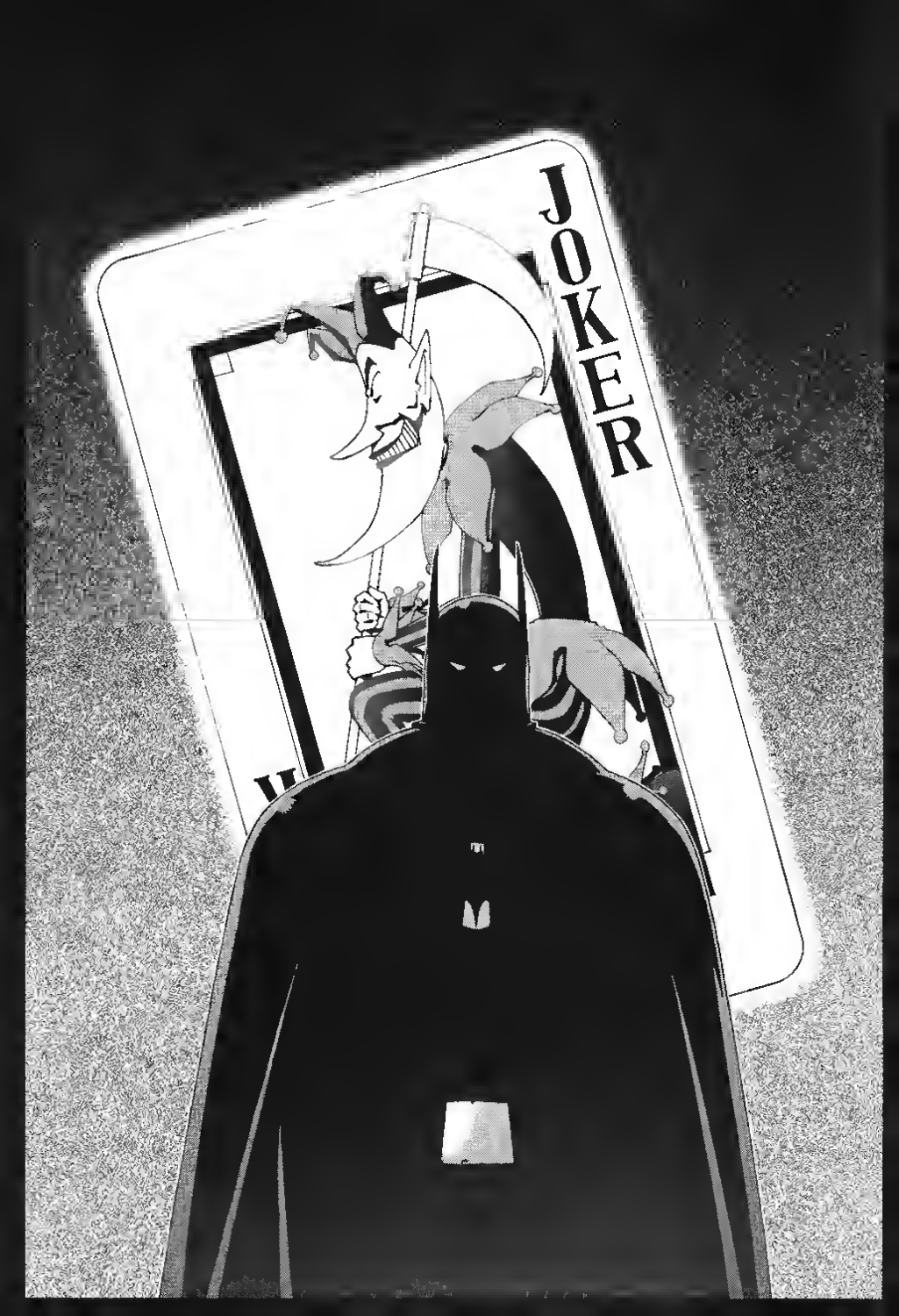
The finished work, as it appeared in Japan, first, in monthly installments in Kodansha's Magazine Z, *and then, upon completion of the story, as a two-volume graphic novel*

FROM JAPAN TO AMERICA:

HOW BATMAN: CHILD OF DREAMS MADE THE JOURNEY BACK HOME

Since Japanese is read from right to left, the first order of business was to digitally "flop" the pages so that American readers could read the book in the traditional English left to-right order. All dialog was removed, to be replaced by Max Allan Collins's adaptation of the original script. Sound effects drawn on the original art, posed a different problem, as now, not only were they no longer in Japanese, they were also backwards!

BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
—AND THIS SECOND ONE'S A REAL KILLER!
BUDDA
BUDDA
POK
POK
POK


JOKER

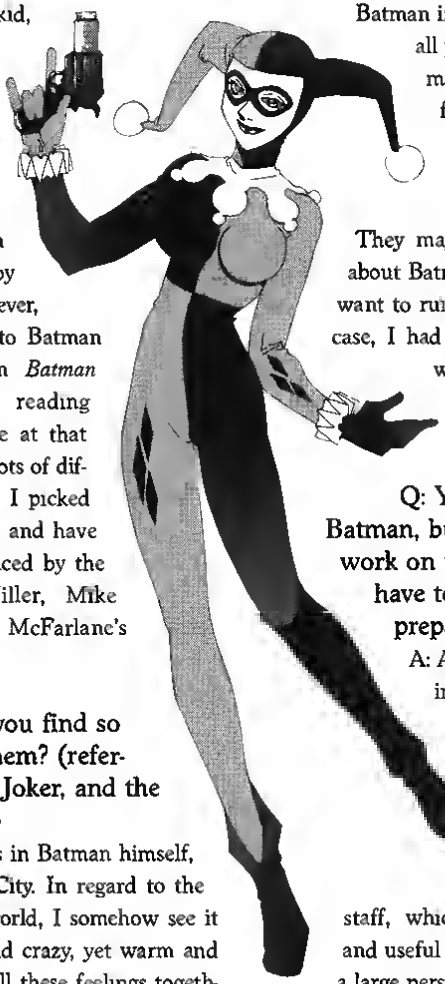
KIA ASAMIYA

A BRIEF INTERVIEW

While still working on the second half of Batman. Child of Dreams, Mr. Asamiya gave an interview to be included in the compiled edition of the first part. His remarks offer an interesting insight into the motivations of a man as obsessed with the Dark Knight as any American-born superhero fan.

Q: Starting off, how were you exposed to Batman?

A: When I was a kid, I probably saw an episode of an animated cartoon or the live-action Batman show on TV. Or it could have been on the packaging of an old Batman model kit designed by Mr. Komatsuzaki. However, what really got me into Batman was the Tim Burton *Batman* movie. I started reading American comics more at that point too. I have read lots of different Batman comics. I picked them mainly by artists and have been especially influenced by the works of Frank Miller, Mike Mignola, and Todd McFarlane's work on Batman.



Q: I see. What do you find so interesting about them? (referring to Bruce, The Joker, and the world they inhabit)

A: My main interest is in Batman himself, and then in Gotham City. In regard to the characters and their world, I somehow see it all as very unstable and crazy, yet warm and welcoming. It blends all these feelings together. Bruce Wayne and the other heroes in Batman are human beings. I think this is what separates Batman the most from the other DC Comics heroes. I guess you could say that I admire Superman, but I'd want to be Batman if I could. This is my overall point of view. I discovered many things while working for DC Comics. I can't say what exactly though, as I realize there are many "Bat-maniacs" in Japan. They may not know a whole lot about Batman though, and I do not want to ruin it for them. But in any case, I had a magnificent time, and working on Batman gave me new love for the 60 years of Bat History.

Q: You know a lot about Batman, but when you began work on the manga, did you have to do any special preparation or research?

A: A lot. When I began working on Batman, I went to New York, which was the model for Gotham City, to collect reference. I also had meetings with the DC Comics staff, which was very meaningful and useful to me. Work aside, I have a large personal collection of Batman memorabilia, and ever since I started working on the project, I have become very greedy and am collecting more and more.

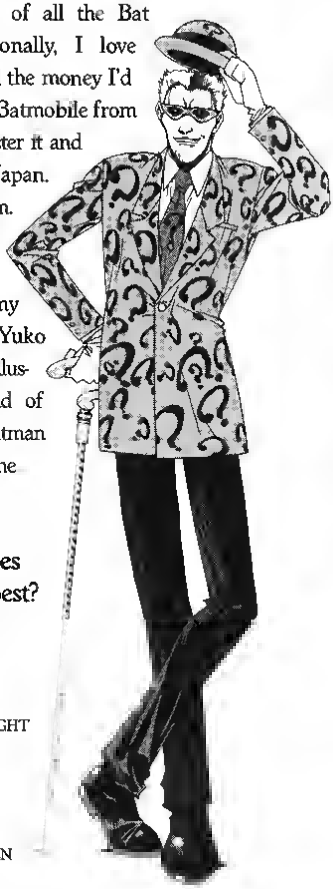
This is the first time any Japanese artist has done original work for DC on a Batman comic. (I often hear this from my American friends and fellow artists.) There was so much pressure on me. Also there were a few Japanese editors who had their doubts about this project.

Q: But you faced the pressures head on and drew Batman. Was there any trouble or confusion when you decided to create your own new characters?

A: If you read the comic, you know that I created an original character, Yuko Yage, who appears throughout the story. I made her someone who had never met Batman before, much like most of the Japanese manga readers. Yuko becomes more involved in the second half of the story. I was relieved that Andy Helfer, my editor at DC, likes how she developed in the story. The Yuko Yagi character is based on an actual person I know.

Q: So you injected some new blood into Batman! But from the already established mythos, what is your favorite character or aspect of the Batman world?

A: My manga aside, my favorite characters are Batman and Batgirl. From the villain's side, I'd have to pick Catwoman and The Joker. I enjoyed drawing the Joker. I also love the Batmobile out of all the Bat gadgetry. Personally, I love cars, so if I had the money I'd buy the actual Batmobile from the movie, register it and drive it in Japan. That's my dream. Getting back to my favorite characters, in my version I like Yuko best. I enjoyed illustrating her. And of course, I love Batman and Bruce Wayne.



Q: Which Batman stories do you like best?

A: GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT, THE KILLING JOKE, THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, MAD LOVE, ARKHAM ASYLUM, and LONG HALLOWEEN

Q: When comparing the American version and Japanese version of Batman, what do you see as the biggest difference?

A: I had to follow certain guidelines when writing and drawing CHILD OF DREAMS. That was the most difficult part of it all. And I could not use certain Japanese manga concepts in my version of Batman. Basically, it all had to have some basis in realism. In manga, there are no problems if I suspend reality and illustrate something crazy or unbelievable. It may surprise the reader, but they know what I am trying to achieve. However, the main rule of thumb when doing Batman is, "Is it realistic or not?" That is more important than anything else. It was very difficult

Q: Any future plans involving Batman?

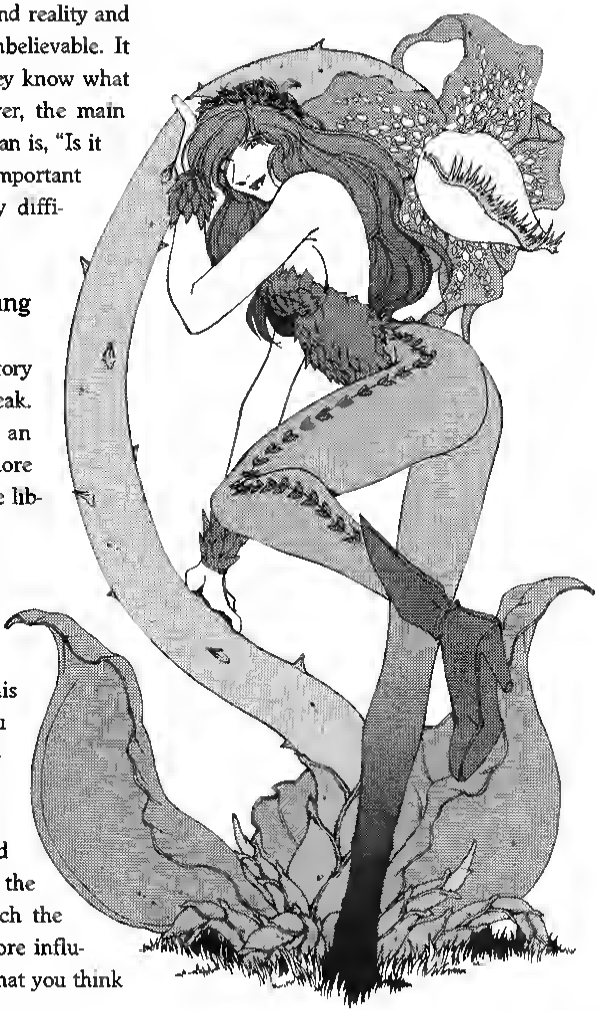
A: After I finish this Batman story I'll probably take a little break. After that, I'd like to do an Elseworlds story, which are more fantasy stories and give me more liberties with Batman.

Q: How about a final message to all the Asamiya fans and Batman fans out there?

A: If for some reason you feel this manga is not Batman as you know him, I think that you misunderstand what Batman is all about. Keep in mind that the movie Batman may be based roughly on Batman, but it is not the real Batman. The Batman which the Japanese are familiar with is more influenced by the movies. I wonder that you think of my original Batman manga, based on the true concept of who and what Batman is. I kept this in mind the whole time I was working on this story.

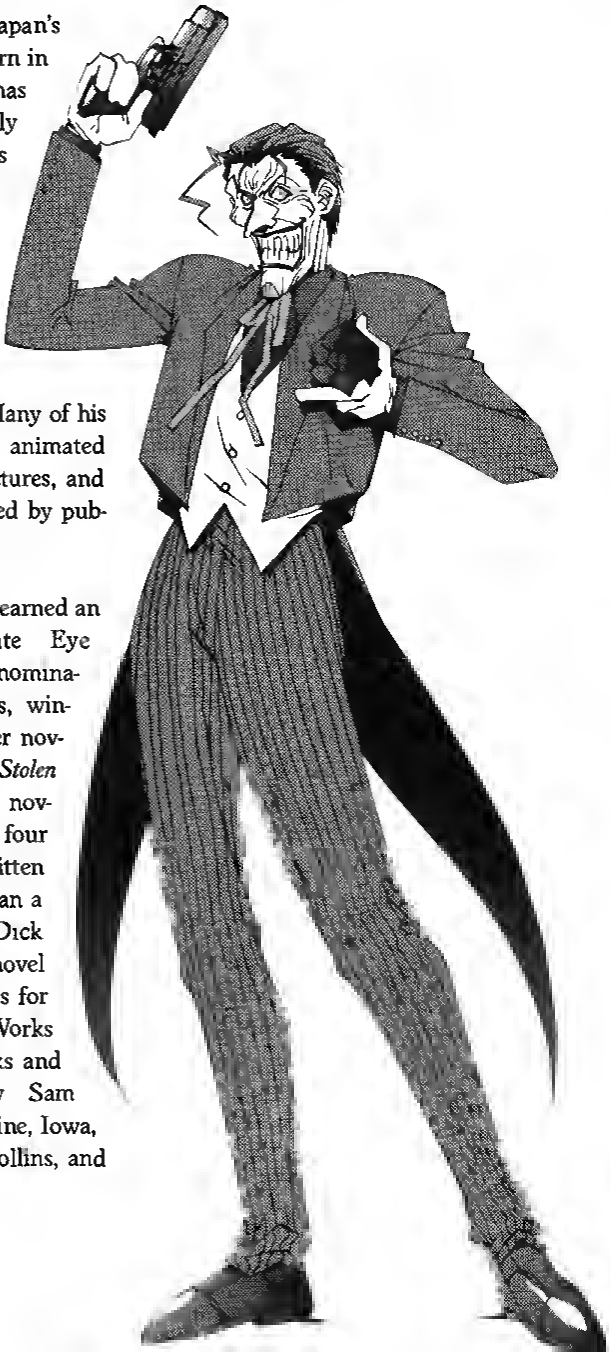
Q: Thank you very much.

A: Thank you!



BIOGRAPHIES

KIA ASAMIYA is one of Japan's foremost manga illustrators. Born in Tokyo in 1963, Mr. Asamiya has written and illustrated literally dozens of novel-length mangas which are as popular with readers today as they were when they were originally issued. His works include Manga classics such as *Silent Moebius, Steam Detectives, Martian Successor Nedesico, Compiler, Dark Angel,* and many others. Many of his works have been adapted for animated television series and motion pictures, and his manga are regularly reprinted by publishers the world over.



MAX ALLAN COLLINS has earned an unprecedented eleven Private Eye Writers of America "Shamus" nominations for his historical thrillers, winning twice for his Nathan Heller novels, *True Detective* (1983) and *Stolen Away* (1991). In addition to his novels, he has written and directed four motion pictures, and has written comics since 1977 when he began a fifteen-year run scripting the Dick Tracy comic strip. His graphic novel ROAD TO PERDITION is the basis for the blockbuster 2002 DreamWorks feature film starring Tom Hanks and Paul Newman, directed by Sam Mendes. Collins lives in Muscatine, Iowa, with his wife, writer Barbara Collins, and their teenage son, Nathan.

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